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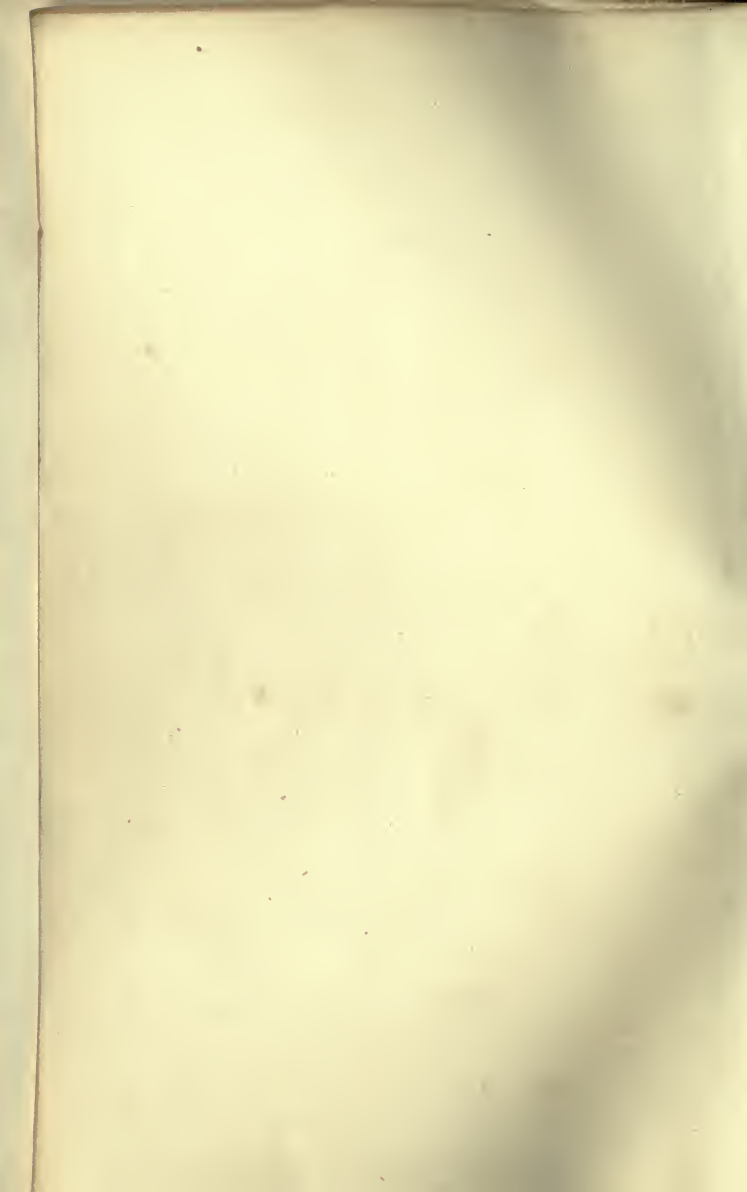
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RECOLLECTIONS
OF
BUSH LIFE IN AUSTRALIA,

DURING A
RESIDENCE OF EIGHT YEARS IN THE INTERIOR.

BY
HENRY WILLIAM HAYGARTH, ESQ.



LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1848.

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RECOLLECTIONS

OF

BUSH LIFE IN AUSTRALIA.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is now more than ten years since Australia was at the zenith of its prosperity and reputation. At that time it annually attracted to its shores a considerable share of British capital and enterprise. Many of the resources of the country had been developed, with surprising skill and energy, by the Anglo-Saxon race, which has ever furnished the most industrious and successful colonists; and the progress of improvement was proportionably rapid. Australia was the land of promise. Companies were formed, which realized large profits. The most triumphant reports reached home by public and private channels, and these reports were confirmed to the fullest extent by the successful adventurers who returned.

A class of persons were induced to emigrate, who had hitherto never thought of casting their lot out of England; and by extravagant expectations were entertained—expectations which no natural advantages of the country could warrant, and no continuance of its prosperity could have fulfilled.

About the year 1840 the tide of fortune began to ebb. Immigration, the most important element of the welfare of an infant colony, was checked. The system of unbounded credit, which had produced its usual over-stimulating effects, was suddenly destroyed; and a panic ensued, bringing with it a series of pecuniary embarrassments, which almost amounted to a public bankruptcy, and caused a shock throughout the community, from which the colony is only now recovering.

Since this commencement of its adversity, Australia has been paying the penalty of having been over-praised and flattered in its prosperity. Its real advantages have been undervalued ; it has been blamed for faults not its own, and made responsible for casualties from which no country is exempt. In the overweening confidence of full-blown prosperity, the ordinary precautions had been neglected, the means usually thought necessary to ensure success had been dispensed with, and the most extravagant speculations had been made.

When the time of re-action arrived, an extraordinary fall of prices was the immediate consequence ; and the over-sanguine colonist, who had ventured his all in the hope of a speedy return to the land of his birth with a competent fortune, found not only that the prospect of wealth was removed to an indefinite distance, but that he could no longer withdraw from the adventure, and that he must remain chained to the spot, unless he chose to retire with the loss of the greater part of his capital. He had probably expended more on his stock and establishment than it would have been prudent to lay out, even if he could have had a guarantee of the continued prosperity of the colony ; and, in the moment of distress, he blames Australia for his disappointment, and not his own want of prudence and foresight.

Australia, it must be admitted, has failed to realize the expectations which it once had raised ; yet much that has been said in its praise is still undeniably true. Few countries have been more highly favoured by nature ; its many yet undeveloped resources, the interesting peculiarities of its animal and vegetable productions, the great success with which those of other countries have been naturalized on its soil, and its healthy and genial climate, all speak strongly in its favour.

It is not a country in which a large fortune can be rapidly made from a small capital ; it is not a country in which thirst for gain will supply the place of knowledge of business, or in which haste and rashness will obtain the rewards of prudence and perseverance. In Australia, as elsewhere, markets are liable to be overstocked and prices to fluctuate ; like other countries, it is subject to natural casualties beyond the control of man ; but it may be doubted whether, upon the whole, any country could with better prospect of success be adopted by the English-

man who is urged by a spirit of adventure, or induced by the hope of improving his situation, to wander from his native land.

The pursuits of the interior, as is generally known, are chiefly pastoral, and these necessitate an active, independent mode of life, which is congenial to English taste, and is singularly attractive to the young. In no position of life, perhaps (as will hereafter be shown), is business so much blended with amusement. For these pursuits the country still holds out an adequate encouragement, and will not disappoint the settler whose expectations are not raised unreasonably high.

If I am compelled to admit the ill-judged haste with which some of my countrymen entered into speculation in Australia, I must also bear testimony to the firmness with which they have met adversity. Whatever had been their previous education and pursuits, nothing could exceed the zeal and energy with which they have learned the business, and adapted themselves to the habits of pastoral life; and not a few among them, who had been brought up to luxury and refinement, have become so enamoured of their new existence, that they would not readily embrace any other less independent, or, as we should call it here, more civilized.

During my residence in the interior, I was in the habit of noting down in a journal the principal events of a life so new, and the most interesting sights of a country so strange. I had at that time no idea of publication: my motive was to preserve, for my own satisfaction, the impressions made upon me by new objects while they yet retained their freshness; believing that, if it should be my fate to return to England, this record of my Australian life would be interesting to me hereafter; or that if my lot should be cast in the colony, it would be amusing to me to look back on the first impressions made by scenes which would then have become too familiar to excite remark.

It is from these notes that I have drawn up my 'Recollections of the Bush.'

Most readers know, or will readily guess, that "the Bush" is the name given to the districts which lie beyond the limits of the colony, and are occupied entirely as a grazing country. In these wild and extensive regions are now gathered such numbers of our countrymen, that in English society there are few who cannot mention some relation or acquaintance among the list of emi-

grants ; and it is the hope of gratifying the curiosity of some of those who have thus an interest in our Australian settlements, which has cheered me on in the task of extracting from my journal such notices as, corrected by subsequent experience and observation, will present most clearly to the reader, in all its details, an idea of pastoral life at the antipodes.

The graver subjects of colonial politics, and commercial and statistical details, I leave to those who are better qualified to discuss them. My situation in a remote district, and the nature of my occupations, gave me no facilities for procuring any new or valuable information on these important points.

I have omitted as far as possible all beaten subjects, which, however amusing, have already been exhausted by others. It has been my object to confine my notices to scenes that I have witnessed myself, and to the life of which I have had eight years' experience, in the hope of making that experience serviceable to those who may tread the same path hereafter.

Bearing this main object in view, I have endeavoured to avoid all exaggeration, and to deserve at least the praise of strict impartiality—to write as one neither soured by disappointment nor elevated by success.

I would fain set before the young colonist's eyes, as clearly and dispassionately as I can, the mode of life he must embrace ; neither throwing over its hardships the air of romance and adventure, to captivate his imagination, nor drawing ludicrous pictures of its privations and incongruities, to shock his taste and love of refinement.

Such advice as my experience suggests I venture to offer ; and if any one of my countrymen is dissuaded by a faithful account of a Bush life from adopting a course to which he is unfitted, or if any one, who still persists in his design of emigrating, is saved from the errors which have been so mischievous to many of his predecessors, I shall have the satisfaction of not having written in vain.

It is necessary to beg the reader's indulgence for the style of the following pages. I would not have shrunk from any degree of labour which might have been necessary to render them more fit for the perusal of the public, but I feared that, in making the attempt, I should deprive them of the air of freshness and truth, which I cannot but feel is their only recommendation.

CHAPTER I.

Early Impressions of Australia—Start for the Interior—Mode of Travelling—Receding Civilization—Scenery—A Way-side Inn—Bush Innkeepers—Alarming Reports—Passing the boundaries of the Colony—Definition of “the Bush”—Arrival at the Station.

I WELL remember how vague and confused, and in many points how unlike the truth, were my early ideas of Australia, of which as yet I had only heard, and to see which I was about to cross some sixteen thousand weary miles of ocean. I had read of some of the most remarkable peculiarities which distinguish its animal and vegetable productions, and I longed more and more to see the country of black swans and bronze pigeons,—of trees that shed their bark instead of their leaves,—cherries that produce their stones on the outside of the fruit,—of cuckoos that, in the same spirit of contradiction, are heard only by night,—and, finally, of that strange anomaly, the *ornithorhynchus paradoxus*, which, from its peculiar attributes, seems to realize the showman’s description of the animal that “could not live on land, and died in the water.”

In everything, as well as in its geographical position, Australia seemed to my fancy to be the direct opposite—the antipodes of England. I became more and more perplexed by every attempt to picture to my mind my future residence, “the Bush;” and I anxiously wondered whether it would prove to be a tangled mass of brushwood, or a barren and desolate heath, or, again, a dense forest, where the axe alone could clear away a spot for the destined abode of the white man.

It was with great satisfaction, therefore, that, some six months subsequently to these speculations, I found myself on the point of having my curiosity satisfied, and without regret I left farther and farther behind me at every step the less interesting civilization of Sydney, as with a well-equipped party we proceeded on our journey towards a station many hundred miles in the interior.

The most usual, and certainly the most agreeable, mode of

travelling in Australia is on horseback : there are coaches which run to a great distance from the capital, but they are of so inferior a description, that, like their now neglected brethren of the present day in England, they are filled only by those who cannot avoid them : for the first stage or two out of the capital they are tolerable enough, but at each change of carriage they gradually dwindle away from good to indifferent, and from indifferent to grotesque, until at last the traveller finds himself seated in a vehicle to which the name of coach can be applied only by courtesy or by metaphor. But on horseback he is thoroughly independent : the valise, strapped on neatly in front of the saddle, contains his whole wardrobe ; and, being master of his own time, he can dispose of it to the best advantage. When the weather is hot he can indulge in a few hours' rest at noon, while his horse crops the herbage around him ; to make up for which delay, he will push on during the cool of the evening ; and, if he is not wholly destitute of the "organ of locality," he can make many a short cut, which will sensibly diminish the dreary length of his journey.

At first he has some power of choice in fixing on a resting-place for the night ; but, as he gradually leaves behind him the "big smoke" (as the aborigines picturesquely call the town), the accommodations become more and more scanty, until at length a night in the open air is the sole alternative, if he fails to reach the solitary wayside inn. As he proceeds farther and farther into the interior, it is curious to remark the gradual descent in the scale of civilization, until scarcely a remnant of it is left. As the royal Sydney mail subsides into a vehicle little better than a market-cart, so the stone or brick hotel gives place to the weatherboard cottage, and this in due time dwindles down to the slab hut beyond the boundaries of the colony, where the traveller's entertainment is confined to the "old thing," as it is contemptuously called, that is to say, beef and "damper"—a sort of cake with which we shall be more familiar as we proceed—and that of his horse to a pair of hobbles, and injunctions from his master to be within sight at daybreak.

From his first few days' journey in the interior the traveller would be apt to form a very unfavourable opinion of Australian scenery. Shortly after leaving the capital he plunges into a vast

mass of forest, through which the route is very uninviting : the trees, which are nearly all of the eucalyptus or gum species (among the least picturesque of the forest tribes), present little or no variety, either in trunk or foliage, except where the bark, hanging in tattered festoons from the branches, reminds him that he is in the land of contrarieties ; the sun shines with a ceaseless glare, and, gaining its full power soon after its rise, abates not a jot in its vigour, until, with seeming reluctance and an evident promise of another warm visit on the morrow, it sinks below the horizon. Not a bird is to be seen, not a note enlivens the ear ; the awful silence is broken only by the dreary cry of the locust, which from somewhere or other (for, as we are told of deceased postboys and donkeys, nobody ever sees one) keeps up the same sing-song chirp, which rings in one's ears long after the sound itself has died away.

Yet Australia has many beauties ; and though its wood-scenery is monotonous, its plains and " open forest " can boast a delightful variety. Many spots are to be met with which are truly picturesque, and these, like oases in the desert, are doubly agreeable, from the contrast.

There is nothing more pleasant during a journey " up the country " than, after a long ride through the forest, to emerge, towards evening, upon some clear and verdant space, surrounded by woods, not terminating abruptly, but shelving down, and opening gradually, as if placed there by the hand of nature as a picturesque fringe to the plain. Here there is a brief but delightful change of sight and sound ; the chirp of the locust ceases, and the murmur of bleating flocks and lowing herds soothes the ear, while the eye dwells refreshed upon a variety of water and pasture, and marks the distant white smoke, which, curling upwards against a dark mass of wooded hills, points out the habitation of man ; the " coach-whip," with his peculiar jerking cry, excites the curiosity of the stranger ; and the bell-bird, never found but in the vicinity of water, adds its musical note. But soon, as the traveller journeys onward, the forest once more closes behind him, and shuts out from view the favoured spot.

After one of these passing glimpses of civilization, it is not without some slight misgivings that the stranger in the colony continues his route, until a casual meeting with a flock of sheep,

or drove of half-wild cattle or horses, hurrying down to market, or with the slow and ponderous wool-dray, again cheers his spirits, as it tells of habitable regions still farther in the interior.

Again the forest opens, and discovers the "running fence" of a paddock, leading to a wayside inn, at the erection of which Nature seems to have lent her aid; and, as if to spare the labours of the axe, to have purposely created a gap just spacious enough for its site, beyond which the gum-trees are once more seen, as dense and monotonous as ever.

The arrival of a party of travellers at a bush-inn in Australia creates little of that eagerness to "give satisfaction" and anticipate the strangers' wants, that is to be met with at most decent country-inns in a land of competition. The owner of the house is usually civil, but the tone of his reception is very unlike what we are used to in the mother-country; and, while he sets forth his accommodations for the benefit of his guests, he does so with the air of a man who is thoroughly aware of the fact that between his own house and the nearest in any direction lie not less than perhaps twenty good miles. Upon the whole, when the traveller rides away on the following morning, he has no reason to

"Sigh to think he still has found
His warmest welcome at an Inn;"

for at many of the settlers' houses, where he gives for his entertainment no other equivalent than his company, his reception will generally be far more cordial.

The fact is, that the chief source of profit to a bush-innkeeper is the custom of the labouring classes. The tap-room is his first consideration, not the parlour; and he more gladly hails the arrival of a party of stock-keepers, bullock-drivers, and men of that stamp, who he knows will drink deep and give little trouble, than that of a better class of travellers, who will require more attendance without a proportionate expenditure.

The larder is necessarily kept on a most limited scale, owing to that pest of the colony, the blow-fly. Eggs and bacon form a standing dish at all country-inns in Australia, as being quickly prepared, and generally preferred to salt-beef, which it is a point of etiquette not to set before the traveller towards the interior, where he must necessarily get too much of it. If a dainty

stranger should attempt to improve his fare by ordering poultry, he must be contented to feast upon the same bird which narrowly escaped his horse's heels as he rode up to the inn, and which he has probably encountered a second time since his arrival, as it came rushing into the house, all legs and wings, screaming dismally, and hotly pursued by the cook.

In less steady climates country-innkeepers are said to avail themselves of their weather-wisdom to detain a hesitating guest by prognostications of bad weather. The dry atmosphere and cloudless skies of Australia drive the cunning host to a different resource, but one still more efficacious with new-comers to the colony—the prevalence of bushrangers, who, somehow or other, always happen to infest the road which the traveller is destined to take at the time. These stories are occasionally only too true, but so many are fabrications, that perhaps the best way is to turn a deaf ear to them altogether. However, the stranger who listens to them will find them “full of incident,” and very alarming, especially if he should arrive at an inn at that time of day which renders it doubtful whether he ought to proceed or make himself at home for the night. He will be informed how Mr. Longbow, the member of council, was stopped “only yesterday, and robbed of his horse, valise, and ‘all the et-ceteras’ of his style,” by the well-known “croppies”—“Black Joe” or “Irish Jem,” one of whom afterwards relented, and in a very handsome manner gave him back his inexpressibles. There will be an account of the disasters which befell Mr. Woolpack, the rich Bathurst settler, who, being suspected of tyrannizing over his men, was tied up to a gum-tree, and only saved from a strong infliction of the stirrup-leather by a false alarm of the approach of the police, upon which the bushrangers decamped, leaving him in a state of bondage, where at nightfall he would infallibly have been eaten alive by native dogs, had he not been fortunately rescued by some “gentle shepherd.”

There is one advantage to be derived from these exciting stories: the thought that they may for once prove true often serves to keep the traveller on his mettle when his energies are beginning to flag, and his body to weary, with the deep solitude and the length of the road.

Such is the usual routine of a journey on horseback from

Sydney into the interior, and such were the events by which my first trip is imprinted on my memory.

Having travelled in this manner some 230 miles in a south-westerly direction from Sydney, we reached the extreme boundary of the colony, beyond which lay, not as a new-comer might naturally expect, a still more uncivilized region, a sort of sylvan chaos, but a country at least as thickly populated and as much reclaimed from the wilds as any that our last two days' journey had shown us; it was, in fact, one of the large grazing districts, covered with as many flocks and herds as the pasture could feed or the neighbouring stockowners allow, without appealing at once to the commissioner of crown lands, with a grievous outcry at the encroachment.

By this time, however, I began to understand the value of that hackneyed expression "the bush," which had formerly perplexed me so much, and to see that it meant little more or less than the country at the antipodes.

Its precise definition, however, like that of the north, is perhaps not so easily given, even by an old colonist: the resident in Sydney would be apt to consider it any place beyond the suburbs of the town; the Haukesbury or Illawarra farmer would place it between 30 and 100 miles from the capital; while the distant settler, the *bonâ fide* bushman, would smile at such fireside notions, and from his dwelling, 300 miles from Port Jackson, he still talks of "going into the bush," which in his sense of the term implies his own lonely out-stations, or regions yet untrodden by the white man; in short, any place beyond the boundaries of his own homestead, and "on this side Sundown."

As a young Englishman draws near the end of his journey, some eight or ten days after leaving the capital, and sees his future abode, where his romance is about to be realized in the actual experience of life in the Bush: his first question perhaps may be, Am I to laugh or cry? Perhaps he has left behind him an affectionate home and a refined society. He brings with him cultivated tastes and a polished education, in which has been included not one subject or branch of knowledge that can be of the slightest use to him in his present pursuits. Perhaps he is conscious that he cast the die in mere wantonness, though on the result of the throw depended the fortunes and complexion of his

whole future life. Is it surprising that, at the moment of completing the sacrifice, he should feel a thrill of compunction? But one qualification he brings with him, in which our young English adventurers are seldom deficient, and which in time supplies the place of all others: I mean that combination of active and passive courage which we call pluck, and for which I know no other term equally comprehensive. He will not acknowledge, even to himself, his hesitation, or rising disappointment. He takes a second survey. He has not wandered away from the old country in search of luxuries; and, upon second thoughts, the appearance of his recent purchase is as promising as he has a right to expect beyond the boundaries of a colony, itself the antipodes of Europe; so, dismissing from his mind all comparisons with home, and all unreasonable expectations or too flattering pictures, he turns and cheerfully contemplates the reality.

The sun was sinking for the ninth time since our departure from the shores of Port Jackson, as our horses stopped to drink at the ford of a pebbly-margined river which ran in front of our station. At that time great expectations were generally entertained as to the fortunes that might be realized in the colony, and my hopes of success and a speedy return were high. Yet I am not ashamed to own, that at this trying hour misgivings *would* arise to sadden my prospects. I was prepared for hardship, but I had hazarded an important step: was I to reap the harvest of my expectations? or had I given up friends, family, civilization, and dear old England, in vain? My companion asked me what I was thinking about; I would not tell him I was thinking of home.

And yet I was better off than many, for we had purchased an "improved station." Scattered here and there over a considerable space of ground, stood the various buildings, eight or ten in number, of which it was composed. In front was the owner's residence, a better sort of wooden cottage, chiefly distinguished on the outside by a verandah; behind and on either side of the house were several huts of an inferior structure, the abodes of the working men. The wool-shed, a long rambling building, surrounded by several low sheep-yards, stood out by itself; while on a distant "flat" appeared a large space, fenced round for a wheat "paddock;" and in another direction a most for-

midable-looking enclosure, covering about half an acre of ground, formed the stockyard for cattle. The whole was backed by some low hills, thinly wooded, and agreeably receding in the distance, and at the foot of these appeared a chain of clear ponds or "waterholes." The general aspect of the place, though holding out, it must be owned, but little promise of luxury, and hardly more of that greater desideratum—comfort, had yet, I remember, an interesting and primitive air, as it thus appeared starting up in the midst of desolation; and this it was which caused it speedily to find favour in the eyes of its new occupants, and stimulated them to toil for its further improvement.

CHAPTER II.

A Head Station in the Interior—Disposition of the Stock—Arrangement of the Buildings—Bush Architecture—An Out-station—Forming a new Station—A Race for Fresh Pasture—A Settler's Stratagem—Anecdotes—Shifting Stock—Hardships—Mode of Watching Cattle by Night—An Encampment in the Bush.

THE residence of a stockowner beyond the boundaries of the colony is usually situated in the most central part of his "station," as that portion of territory is called of which he holds the temporary possession, it being in fact the property of the crown, to which he annually pays a certain sum for permission to depasture his stock thereon. By stock, in Australia, are understood sheep, horned cattle, and horses; some breeders turn their whole attention to the former, and some confine it to the two latter conjointly, but, generally speaking, it is usual, as it is most judicious and profitable, to combine each sort.

On an establishment where each kind of stock is kept, they are separated as much as possible, different parts of the station being allotted to each; the object of this is to prevent their interfering with each other, to their mutual detriment; for though horses and cattle will feed together upon the same spots, yet both have a strong antipathy to the vicinity of sheep, so much so that there is no more effectual method of driving them away than by feeding a flock or two of sheep over their pasture grounds.

The sheep, therefore, are "put out" at smaller "stations," on which two or three flocks are grazed; these are generally from two to five miles distant from the residence of the proprietor, or overseer, and for the most part consist merely of a single hut, capable of accommodating two or three men, and are erected in such parts of the station as are particularly favourable to sheep, which, being the most profitable stock, receive the greatest share of attention. The judicious manager, however, contrives to make the most of his run, as well as of his stock, by placing

each sort upon those parts which, from the quality of the pasture, and nature of the country, are best suited to their habits; he occupies the dry hills and sound plains with his sheep, and allows his cattle to appropriate the spots most congenial to their nature, such as river banks, swampy creeks, and the moist, low grounds, generally; while his horses, which, though of a rambling disposition, do not require such constant inspection as the rest, are suffered to roam far and wide, over the whole station, and are not much restricted so long as they do not transgress its extreme bounds.

The head station, at which the owner or superintendent resides, is generally so situated as to be as nearly as possible equidistant from the several sheep stations, to which frequent visits are necessary. The huts, paddocks, and various other "improvements," as they are generally called, are often spread out here and there, over a large space of ground, the land being of little value; and perhaps on this account it is, that a large establishment, though composed separately of very rude materials, presents, upon the whole, from its extent, rather an imposing appearance, especially when viewed from a distance.

The principal buildings are generally placed upon a gentle eminence, slightly removed from the rest, and consist of the owner's residence, the kitchen, and store; the two latter, situated behind the former, are generally mere huts, built after the ordinary bush fashion, of wooden slabs, whitewashed on the outside, and roofed with the bark of trees; the proprietor's abode has, however, greater pretensions to comfort and external effect; the rough slabs of which it is built, in common with the other edifices, are concealed by lath and plaster, which, being whitewashed, and "lined" on the outside so as to resemble a stone structure, has a more substantial appearance. Weather-board cottages, which are better and more expensive, are occasionally constructed: but though very common nearer the capital, and in the more settled parts of the colony, they are looked on as a sort of unnecessary luxury, beyond the boundaries. The roof is covered with shingles, instead of the more unsightly bark of trees, while a verandah is carried out in front, and frequently serves, in default of any other external distinction, to point out to a stranger the owner's abode.

The largest building on the whole establishment is the wool-shed, where the sheep are shorn, and the wool stowed, during the short time it remains upon the station, previously to its being sent to Sydney ; it is usually placed at some little distance from the owner's residence, and is also constructed of wooden slabs, with a roof of bark, but is much higher and longer than the other buildings, and somewhat resembles a barn or out-house ; it is floored with narrow slabs of wood, to protect the fleeces from dirt, whilst the sheep are shorn, for which purpose they are always placed on the ground. The door of the wool-shed opens upon several low yards, used at shearing time to separate the sheep, while a higher fence encloses a larger space beyond, which is used as a stackyard for wheat and hay ; a wool-press, and a table on which the fleeces are folded, constitute the only furniture of the interior.

Still further off, an open space is occupied by the stockyard, for the reception of the numerous herds of cattle and horses ; and nearer the house is another yard of similar construction, but much smaller, in which the cows are milked, working oxen yoked, saddle horses driven when they are wanted, and cattle slaughtered for home consumption ; for this latter purpose it is furnished with what is usually known as a gallows, which is simply formed by two saplings, about twenty feet high, forked at the top, on which is laid a strong cross piece, to which the carcase of the animal is pulled up by means of a windlass, fixed outside the yard, and thus it is suspended to cool during the night. The abodes of the working men, which are merely slab huts of the rudest description, each containing two rooms or divisions, are scattered here and there, usually in the back ground, and complete the picture of the head station.

Bush, or slab huts, are built wholly of wood, in the following manner : four posts are sunk in the ground to a depth varying with the height and size of the building, and form the four corners : these support long beams, or wall-plates, grooved on the under side, and immediately beneath these again wooden sleepers are laid in the ground, a little below the surface, which are grooved similarly to the wall-plates, and are, in fact, the main foundations of the building ; the sides, or wooden walls, are formed of slabs, the ends of which are respectively fitted into

these grooved plates, and the sides are smoothed off with the adze to make them fit close together. On the wall-plates a simple roof is fixed in the usual manner, the covering of which consists either of shingles, or of the long wiry grass of the country, or of the bark of trees, usually of the "stringy bark," or of the box-tree. The bark is stripped from the trunk in sheets of about six feet by three, and is fastened to the roof by means of a wooden frame, so constructed as to press some part of every sheet, and thus to keep down the whole. The chimneys, which are placed outside at either end, are also built of wood, and are fortified on the inside with stone, which is carried up sufficiently high to prevent the flames from reaching the outer slabs.

In the course of a few years, when the stock-owner finds that the station he originally occupied is becoming too small to support the increased numbers of his flocks and herds, (as will be the case if he has met with average success,) he is compelled, in order to prevent his "run" from being too heavily stocked, either to sell off his superfluity, or find new pasturage elsewhere. On this point he uses his own judgment, but as it frequently happens both that the state of the market is unfavourable for effecting sales, and that no unoccupied land is to be procured in the vicinity, even for money, at the time, he has no alternative but to push off with his extra stock in quest of some new country, and there to form a branch, or out-station. Here he erects huts, paddocks, and other "improvements," sufficient for the number of men he purposes leaving in charge of his stock; and hither he makes periodical journeys, more or less frequently, as circumstances render necessary. The requisite supplies are sent by means of bullock teams, which, if the station be a distant one, take at each trip sufficient for six or twelve months, or when the roads are so bad as to be impassable for drays, pack-bullocks are used, which will carry about two hundredweight each.

When the stock at one of these out-stations consists of sheep, it is usual to have them brought in to the head station at shearing time; and when of horses or cattle, the owner travels out to visit them several times during the year, generally in spring, or towards the end of summer, for the purpose of collecting them, branding the young stock, and sending to market any that are fit for sale.

There are few more lonely spots than the majority of these out-stations ; they are seldom occupied by more than two or three men—the stock-keeper, who has charge of the herd, and another man, whose business it is to cook, fetch water, grind and bake, and, in short, keep house. The head station, or owner's residence, is distant perhaps 100 miles and upwards, and the nearest habitation of any sort is probably some solitary bush hut, similarly occupied by a herdsman or shepherd, and his helpmate. The settler, though accustomed to the loss of society, is, in truth, seldom fond of visiting these places more often than is absolutely necessary for the welfare of his property ; and on returning to his head station, so strong is the contrast, that he feels as if he were restored again to the centre of civilization.

When about to form one of these out-stations, the settler endeavours previously to obtain as much information respecting the country which he intends to occupy as he can procure without divulging his intentions, an indiscretion which would perhaps be equivalent to frustrating them altogether, for some of his neighbours also are probably on the look-out for new pasture ; and as the right to a station in a new part of the country beyond the boundaries of the colony belongs, not to the original discoverer, but to him who is the first to occupy it with stock, it behoves him to keep the “whereabouts” of the spot which he has in view as much to himself as possible. But it is always desirable for the stock-owner to visit a new country in person, and form his own opinion as to the quality of its pasture, and other capabilities, previously to taking possession, provided always that he can do so unobserved.

When, however, two parties, having the same object in view, meet on the road, all disguise is at an end, each speedily penetrates the other's object, and the war, with its manœuvres, commences—first possession, in this case, being every point of the law. Under such circumstances, as these, the energy and ingenuity of both parties are called into action ; and though the strongest stock and best mounted men have a great advantage, yet the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong ; stratagem, and the casualties of the road, frequently turn the scale in favour of the weaker side.

As an instance of this I recollect hearing of the ruse by which

a very fine station, many hundred miles in the interior (where I once passed a night), came originally into its owner's possession. He went out by agreement with two or three others on an exploring expedition, in search of new land for grazing purposes, and, after penetrating some very broken and "scrubby" country, they emerged from the forest upon a fine plain, verdant and well watered. He at once saw that it would suit his purpose, provided that he could get the sole possession of it, but that it would be over-stocked if divided. In a case of this sort, I fear that, according to the code of morality in an infant colony, most artifices are accounted fair; so accordingly he seemed to take but little notice of the spot, speaking rather disparagingly of its merits, and expressing his opinion that better country would be discovered by going farther on, and, as his judgment had considerable weight with the party, they all proceeded on their journey. On the following day he was taken ill, and, regretting that he was obliged to return, he left his fellow-travellers to prosecute their search. But, after seeing them fairly on their road, he recovered from the illness which had answered his purpose, and, making his way back to his old station, he speedily returned to the place he had fixed on, with stock sufficient to occupy the whole of it, to the exclusion of his disappointed companions, who discovered too late that his illness had only been what the blacks would have called "plenty too much gammon."

It is upon such occasions as these that the energy which a bush life at no time suffers to stagnate is fully displayed: I remember the instance of a man who was making his way through the country with his stock, drays, &c., for the purpose of occupying a very desirable station in some newly discovered "land of promise." When within a few days of his journey's end he arrived at the foot of a mountain which lay in his road, and which was so steep and difficult of access, that, to a party driving stock, it was considered a good day's journey to accomplish the ascent. Here he was preparing to encamp for the night in the usual way, when he received intelligence that another party, having in view the same object as himself, were halting at a short distance from the top, fully aware of his vicinity, and prepared to start at daybreak on the following morning.

Though all his men were thoroughly wearied by a long day's

journey, he was determined to be first at the goal ; so, selecting some of the strongest animals from his herds, he set out again directly, and by dint of working all night succeeded in getting his stock to the top of the mountain before dawn of day. Then making a slightly circuitous route, he pushed a-head of his competitors, who, on arriving at the station they were bound for, were astonished to find it already in the possession of those whom they had believed to be a full day's journey in their rear.

The removal of stock from one part of the country to another is attended with no little trouble and labour : previously to setting out, the sheep must be brought in from the several stations, classed, and counted ; the cattle, numbering perhaps upwards of a thousand, have to be driven into the enclosures, and "draughted," or subdivided ; the drays must be repaired, and loaded with supplies, and everything requisite for a long trip ; this occupies several days, to say nothing of minor delays from stray saddle-horses, and the absence of working bullocks (which seem to have a fellow-feeling with the horses, in never being at hand when most wanted), and from the constant insatiable demands on the part of the servants for every sort of saddlery, bullock-gear, and harness of every description ; nor is it the least difficult part of the business to manage the working men at so critical a time, who, thoroughly knowing their own importance on such occasions, are apt, if not treated with great tact, to throw many obstacles in the way of "the master," who often finds that the only means of ending them is by giving orders for starting at once, and feels heartily glad, like the mate of a merchantman, that he has been able to get off upon any terms.

Once fairly upon the road, the appearance of the line of march is animated and interesting, and may be compared, without any great stretch of fancy, to some of the migrations of the early patriarchs, Abraham or Lot, journeying in the land of Canaan.

As long as the travellers can calculate on reaching a station at night, their hardships are lessened by the enjoyment of a roof over head, and the use of enclosures for the stock ; but as they recede more and more from the habitations of men, these advantages cease, and the flocks and herds must be watched during the night, a process which, with cattle, is very tiresome, and one that effectually murders sleep, doubly welcome as it is

after the fatigues of the day. But watching is absolutely necessary, as the cattle, if not confined by some means or other, would, ere the dawn, be many miles on their road back to their old pastures, urged by the strong local attachment which they invariably possess.

The manner in which a large herd of cattle is enclosed at night in default of stockyards, is, I believe, peculiar to Australia : shortly before dusk they are driven on to some open, level ground, where, if procurable, some natural barrier on one side, such as a steep hill or river bank, is a great advantage. Here they are stopped, and encircled by horsemen, who continue to hem them in until others have in the mean time lit large log fires around them, at a distance of ten or twelve yards apart. As soon as these are blazing pretty strongly, the horsemen retire by the intervening spaces, and the cattle find themselves encompassed by a ring of flame, of which they have at all times a dread, and particularly at night.

Notwithstanding every precaution, however, it is no easy matter to keep them together until daybreak : a constant watch must be continued on all sides, to prevent their breaking through the spaces between the fires, which some of them are always on the alert to do, if the flames begin to slacken ; and if one of the cattle leads the way, it is next to impossible to prevent the others from following the example. The stockmen, therefore, are obliged to walk backwards and forwards during the whole night, replenishing the flames, and keeping back the cattle with as little noise as possible, for if suddenly alarmed, the whole herd would certainly rush through every obstacle, and make their escape ; but with proper care the end is usually gained : hundreds of huge animals, any one of whose strength would be too great for that of all the men united, are thus made to yield to human stratagem, and remain within the limits of the prescribed circle.

The vagrant and primitive mode of life experienced in these overland trips, if it has hardships, can boast on the other hand of many pleasures peculiar to itself, especially to the young and adventurous, to many of whom its utter dissimilarity with early habits renders it more pleasing from the contrast ; there are charms in the early morning breeze, and the breakfast, like a pic-

nic, at sunrise ; in the thoroughly independent way in which the adventurer traverses the pathless wilds, with the whole land before him ; in the drowsy halt at noon, and finally in the quiet evening's encampment, when, after washing away all remembrance of the toil and heat of the journey in some cool stream, as yet untouched by the white man, he can rest beneath the canopy of heaven, "nor care beyond to-day."

Under these circumstances preparations for passing the night are soon made : every traveller in "the bush" carries with him his tinder-box, and as soon as the tin quart pot, which has been dangling all day at the saddle-bow, boils at the crackling log-fire, and is converted into a tea-pot, and the eatables, consisting of corned beef and "damper," are spread out upon the grass, the meal is ready, and he has nothing to do but to fall to with the appetite of a traveller. After allowing an hour or so for digestion, he rolls himself for the night in the blanket or "'possum-cloak," which by day is strapped on before him, and sleeps with his head between the flaps of the saddle, which, turned upwards, is the ordinary bush substitute for a pillow.

This sensation of absolute freedom, which is one of the chief attractions of this sort of life, some might say its only one, gains a strong hold upon many minds ; and it is certain that in a new country, such as Australia, there are few men who, after leading a pastoral life, would be able to content themselves with the less exciting and less independent occupations of agriculture, such as it is pursued in the more thickly populated parts of the colony, or in the vicinity of the capital.

CHAPTER III.

Society in the Inland Districts—Hospitality of Settlers—The Labouring Classes—State of Morality—Habitual Swearing—Intoxication—A Bush Public House—Anecdotes—An Inland “Spa”—Prospects of Improvement.

FEW places can show so strange a mixture, and yet so complete a “fusion,” of the heterogeneous materials of its society, as “the Bush” of Australia. It is curious to see men differing so entirely in birth, education, and habits, and in their whole moral and intellectual nature, thrown into such close contact, united by common interests, engaged under circumstances of perfect equality in the same pursuits, and mutually dependent on each other for all the good offices of civility and neighbourhood. Here, perhaps, is the station of a Sydney merchant, or member of council, who seldom visits it in person, and leaving its entire management to an overseer, seems to consider it rather beneath his dignity to trouble himself about it, except during the wool season, when he makes his annual visit, to “send down his produce, and find fault with the superintendent.”

In such cases, therefore, the real neighbour for all practical purposes is the overseer, a hired servant, though, strange to say, he is often a man of more education than his principal.

The owner of the adjoining station is perhaps an emancipist, a reformed character of course, as his emancipation and his present occupation prove; under this name an extraordinary variety, from the lowest to a high degree, of intellect and cultivation may be found. The next may be a native white of the lower grade, who, notwithstanding that he is possessed of numerous flocks and herds, lives on in the same rough style as when he began to settle, and in appearance and manner is hardly to be distinguished from one of his own men, while the nearest neighbour to this “specimen of raw material” is an Etonian, who has perhaps originally entered upon a bush life in the hope of making sufficient money to enable him to return in comfort to the land of

his birth : in this he has been disappointed, but his former tastes and habits display themselves in all that surrounds him. He has given to his slab hut the external appearance of what the advertisements may be supposed to mean by their own favourite phrase, a cottage ornée. In the interior he has softened down the rude materials of bush architecture into the likeness of an English drawing-room or library. Book-shelves fill every available nook ; here and there are to be seen articles of exotic luxury, perhaps of ladies' work, the remembrances of distant friends ; and every resource of ingenuity is exhausted to produce imitations of the elegances and refinements which he has left behind him, perhaps for ever.

In the most agreeable and useful class of neighbours are the native whites of the better stamp, or, as they are usually called, "natives," for be it understood, once for all, that the word native, as used in the colony, invariably means a white man, one born in Australia of European parents. The aborigines are called "the blacks." Many of these are kindhearted, intelligent men ; they are tormented by no secret contempt for the country they inhabit, and no wish to exchange it for another ; they accept "the bush" as their home, and are desirous to improve to the utmost its advantages.

However, to a resident in these remote districts, society must always be a lottery ; and no one, when purchasing a station, cares to inquire who or what his neighbours may be, if satisfied with his bargain in other respects. But, generally speaking, he is nearly sure of having in his vicinity at least some companionable people ; it is well if they are to be found within a few miles, but, if otherwise, the contempt of distance created by circumstances in the interior of New South Wales will probably place some of them within his reach. All his neighbours must at least be possessed of energy, industry, and the good qualities which these imply, for otherwise they will soon cease to be his neighbours, as they will be ruined and obliged to leave the district, and from all he may learn much. It would be very bad philosophy to fancy that he was keeping up his European refinements by being fastidious in discovering their faults and deficiencies. But it is not merely toleration that may be claimed for his brother settlers, he will find some whose acquaintance

may be cultivated with pleasure, and whose friendship may be sought with real advantage.

On one point all residents in "the Bush" are agreed, however different may have been their early lives and habits, and whatever are their further views—hospitality is an universal virtue, so much so that its merits are frequently overlooked; and there is probably no part of the world that can be traversed by the total stranger without friends or money so easily as the bush of Australia, where, for hundreds of miles together, so long as he can reach a station, he will be sure of finding a home.

This necessitates an item in the expenses of an establishment little dreamt of in the calculations of a new comer; a certain amount of extra provisions, regulated by the extent of the neighbouring population, is weekly allowed, and duly served out, "for callers:" this, though not absolutely imperative, has become nearly so by custom, and he who in this respect chose to stand in single opposition to the feelings and practice of the society around him, would find ample cause to repent his churlishness if the law of retaliation were applied to him whenever he stirred abroad.

In fact hospitality among so widely scattered a population is a necessity; but it is from impulse, and not from a sense of this necessity, that its duties are practised. Indeed it has been doubted whether any merit can be claimed for its exercise by men who lead so solitary a life that the sight of any strange face may be considered as a pleasure. But in every part of the world hospitality must spring in some measure from a dislike of solitude. It is hardly fair to analyze so closely the composition of human virtues; and on retrospection of several years' experience, I can confidently affirm that in Australia hospitality is not, on the whole, its own reward. Of the medley of travellers there are so many whose company, so far from being agreeable, can hardly be tolerable to their entertainers, that the profuse hospitality of "the Bush" may fairly claim at least whatever merit is assigned to this virtue in more civilized parts of the globe.

What hospitality can in fact compare with that which extends its favours without distinction to it knows not whom, and in the exercise of which every old association or prejudice is to be subdued? How often does the new comer from England find his family pride alarmed by the company of one whose forefathers'

deeds, and even perhaps his own, will not bear recollection ; while not unfrequently the Scotch emigrant, a rigid Presbyterian, is forced, on a Sunday evening, to learn a lesson of practical toleration by receiving the visit of a Roman Catholic priest !

All travellers are universally welcome throughout the far districts, literally stopping, as the blacks call it, "all about." There is something positively ludicrous in the coolness with which a total stranger rides up to a station, turns out his horse, and, confident of his reception, makes himself at home as quickly as possible, with a very secondary care as to what the proprietor may think about his proceedings. This is also the custom among the labouring classes, and in addition to the hired servants there are often assembled several others, some from the neighbourhood, and some wholly unknown, to pass the night among their fellows at a head station.

The most irksome part of the economy of a stock establishment in the interior of New South Wales is the management of the labouring classes, over whom the owner or the superintendent has so little hold that considerable dexterity is required to keep matters in a proper state. Working men are usually hired by the year, seldom with any intention on their part of staying beyond that time. The wages are not paid weekly, but at the expiration of the term of agreement, though in the interim a portion of them is advanced if desired. A written character is seldom given or required, the only questions asked of a new man being whether he is free, or a "ticket of leave holder," and if he is competent to perform his work ; if he can give a satisfactory answer on these points his previous conduct is seldom looked into, so long as he does not grossly misbehave.

This is one of the many bad effects arising from the scarcity of labour, from which most new colonies suffer, and which is at present the most serious drawback to the rising prosperity of Australia ; for there the labourer cares little to keep any situation but a very lucrative one, well knowing that he need not be long out of employment whenever he is really desirous of obtaining it.

Of those among the labouring classes who emigrate to Australia, the best, as may naturally be supposed, do not ordinarily find their way very far into the interior ; being eagerly sought

after, they naturally prefer to live in the vicinity of the capital, and in the more civilized districts. It is only the inferior class, for the most part, who push off beyond the boundaries of the colony; and the difficulty which residents in the bush find in procuring good, or even tolerable servants, can only be known to those who have experienced the vexations of a search after "a steady couple."

It frequently happens, in contradiction to what might be expected, that those labourers who have been most exposed to hardship in the old country are the most troublesome and fastidious when they find themselves in another. There was a story current in our part of the colony of a stockowner who was much pestered by the complaints of one of his shepherds, an Irish emigrant, to the effect that his weekly allowance of tea was insufficient. But as it was ample for most men, the proprietor instituted an inquiry into the matter, and discovered that the ill-advised grumbler knew so little of the use and value of his new acquisition, that he was in the habit of boiling the leaves, and eating them with his meat by way of a vegetable.

Churches are now being erected in most parts of the far districts in the interior of Australia, which before had been grievously in want of them; and when their widely scattered and migratory population receive the benefits arising from an organized system of religious instruction, we may reasonably hope for a visible change for the better in the aspect of society, but up to the present time the general tone of morality, especially among the working classes, has been extremely low. The two most glaring vices, intoxication and profane swearing, prevail throughout the interior of New South Wales to an extent hardly conceivable but by those who have actually witnessed it.

Upon hearing a party of what are called "old hands" in the country talking together, not under the influence of liquor, but in their usual manner, or perhaps slightly excited by some recent occurrence, a stranger might not unreasonably suppose that he was listening to a race of people who had forgotten their mother tongue, and adopted that of the devil in its stead. From the force of constant example, which is always so very contagious in this particular, the native-born youths often inherit this way of talking, and grow gradually callous to its enormity, thus handing

down to succeeding generations one of the most pernicious legacies of the old Botany Bay convicts. Additional incentives to this vice are found in the exciting character of the pursuits in the interior, and in the nature of the climate, which, fine as it is, has, from its extreme dryness, a tendency to produce irritability.

It is melancholy to witness the effect of this habit, which, until better means for checking it are taken, must naturally be a widely spreading evil; most painful of all is it to hear the aborigines, a race declared by many to be so rude that all instruction is thrown away upon them, adopting in their quarrels, and even in their ordinary discourse, the worst expressions of their civilized brethren, from an intercourse with whom they have not only gained no advantage, but have learned unconsciously to blaspheme their Maker. Theirs has been the education of Caliban—

“You taught me language, and my profit on ’t
Is, I know how to curse.”

The prevalence of intoxication is hardly less universal; a drunkard in the interior of New South Wales cannot, like those among the labouring classes in England, spend his wages in daily or weekly visits to the ale-house, but, after the manner of a buccaneer of old, or a sailor at the end of a long cruise, having been debarred by circumstances from his favourite dissipation, he makes amends by plunging deeper into it when he has it within his reach. After living perhaps at a distance of many days’ journey from the possibility of indulgence in this vice, he finds himself, at the expiration of six or twelve months, master of a good sum of money, perhaps (with the exception of a trifle spent upon clothes) the whole of his yearly wages; after receiving which he repairs alone, or with one or two congenial spirits, to the nearest public-house or “grog-shop,” where, in the course of a few days, he often dissipates the whole earnings of the past year.

Many of these men have a custom of placing their whole stock of money in the publican’s hands from the very commencement of their visit, with the intention of drinking as much as they think sufficient, and receiving the balance. They are apt to consider this a highly prudent plan, as it prevents the possibility of their pockets being rifled by their companions while they are

in a happy state of unconsciousness ; but they too often find that they have only fallen from Scylla into Charybdis, and literally “reckoned without their host,” whose hands, which readily closed upon their money, cannot easily be induced to relax their grasp.

Some of these road-side “grog-shops” are the curse of the neighbourhood, and are particularly dreaded by the sheep-owners whose stations are adjacent, and who are obliged to be constantly on the alert to prevent the neglect and loss of their flocks from the effects of tippling among their shepherds. The proprietors of these houses are frequently men of very indifferent character, whose sole object is to make money and decamp as soon as possible ; and, not contented with getting the unfortunate labouring man’s money in the proper, or rather improper, course of business, they have been detected in making great additions to his account while he is in a state of insensibility, trusting that when he recovers he will be entirely unable to dispute the items.

A strong instance of absolute slavery to this habit was afforded by a man in our neighbourhood, who had repeatedly started for the purpose of visiting his relations in the vicinity of Sydney, but who had not succeeded in reaching them during a space of several years, being unable to guard his pockets against the Siren influence of the road-side inns, from one of which he would constantly retrace his steps with exhausted means, to toil again, like a modern Sisyphus, for an end that he was never to attain.

I was once riding alone through the bush, on my way to Sydney, and as I approached one of these road-side inns I became sensible of an indescribable sort of scuffling sound, which gradually increased as I came to the entrance, where, like Petruchio, I found “no attendance, no regard, no duty ;” but as both man and horse were hungry, I walked in, and soon penetrated the mystery. In an inner apartment some eight or ten men, the whole of the visible inmates of the house, were deeply engaged in a pugilistic mêlée, apparently without there being any private quarrel in the case, for each individual, without any invidious distinction, was, in sporting phraseology, “pitching into” his nearest neighbour. The owner of the house, upon seeing me,

extricated himself from the fray, and tried to accomplish an apology; but I saw that there was little prospect of the restoration of order for some time, so I resumed my journey, speculating whether returning sobriety, or the total extinction of the combatants, would first occur to bring matters to a conclusion.

However slight, and even ludicrous an impression such scenes as these may make at the time, they must painfully recur to the mind in moments of reflection, and cause us to fear that if proper steps are not taken by those who have the power, by Government as far as it can act, and by individuals each in his own sphere, to check the progress of vice in an infant colony, retribution may one day fall heavily on those who have been guilty of this neglect. If, upon the approach of the white man, these majestic forests are to echo to the uncontrolled sound of riot and debauchery, it would have been better that their deep silence had remained unbroken for ever.

In one of the southern districts a fine soda spring was discovered, and on the strength of this a bush inn had been erected in its vicinity, its owner speculating on the probability of its bringing him a quick sale of spirits, by admixture of its water with acid and alcohol. In this he was not disappointed, for it soon became a favourite beverage among his customers, until the following characteristic incident took place. It entered the heads of a party of carousers at the inn that a great deal of time and trouble would be saved by converting the whole well into one large effervescing draught, and for this purpose they collected a great quantity of spirit, sugar, and acid, and having showered them down into the water and stirred it about with a pole, they awaited the mighty result: this, the story goes on to say, proved unsatisfactory; little besides mud came to the top, and the spring never recovered the outrage.

At these inns in the interior little else is drunk but raw spirits, for a mixture with water is commonly considered equivalent to spoiling both. It is terrible to see the state to which a man is sometimes reduced who, in a warm climate like that of Australia, has been drinking new and bad liquor for several days, during which he has eaten little or nothing. He suddenly awakes out of a drunken sleep and finds that his money is all gone, and with

it his best means of recovery, which, in such cases, is to take smaller quantities of liquor, diminishing them by degrees till he recovers his strength: as he is unable to do this, his nerves are suddenly relaxed, and he is attacked by delirium tremens, the severe penalty of his excesses.

At a township on the eastern coast of Australia I saw a most salutary method put into practice for keeping order among a set of these hard drinkers: there was a large empty room at one end of the inn, into which its owner, who was a very powerful man, used to thrust his customers as soon as ever they grew noisy; and thus one might see them "quoited down" by couples, and locked in, until soberness again dawned upon them.

There is no arguing with men confirmed in this habit. I have frequently done so, and cannot boast of ever having made a convert, even to the theory of temperance. The conversation on such occasions was pretty much as follows:—"Now, my man, you've worked hard during the last twelve months, and let me recommend you to give up your old practices, and lay by your money."—"Well, so I would, Sir, if it was a good round sum, but where's the use of hoarding up a few pounds? it's better to 'be happy' while it lasts." "But what will you do when you grow old and can't work, if you go on in this way?"—"Oh! I don't know, Sir; if it comes to the worst I must get some one to knock me on the head." It was useless to remonstrate with such an arguer; he would sooner die in poverty than deny himself the gratification of "drinking his wages."

This prevailing habit is in fact the chief cause that prevents servants, such as stock-keepers and persons of that description, from speedily realizing a sum sufficient to enable them to become stockowners on their own account. Thus, were the habits of the working classes more temperate, labour would be far dearer and scarcer than it is, for no steady or sober man need pass many years of his life as a servant.

It is satisfactory to know that, prevalent as this vice still is, it has certainly decreased in the interior, since the pecuniary difficulties under which the colony laboured a few years ago, and from which it is now but just recovering, taught all classes a severe practical lesson.

In former years excessive prosperity, and an overweening con-

fidence in its duration, had encouraged extravagance and recklessness; but the stockowners of the present day are, generally speaking, as temperate and economical as they are industrious. Many strangers, however, who have visited Sydney, have been misled in this particular, and have imbibed an idea that dissipation is as common among the higher as the lower classes in the interior, from hearing of the extravagant feats of a few "wild ones," who happen at the time to be "down the country."

Being "down the country,"—it is necessary to explain, for the benefit of the English reader, who otherwise would not probably guess it—is the phrase by which, in "the bush," a visit to the capital is signified.

In order to check the vices of which we are speaking among the labouring population, and to raise the general tone of morality in the far inland districts, we can only look to a wider and more effectual dissemination of religious instruction. But, unhappily, the extensive dispersion of the population opposes the most serious impediment to the establishment of churches and schools. Nor can this impediment be removed as long as the country is occupied for pastoral purposes, (for which it offers every advantage, and none, as far as we now see, for any other,) and as long as the inhabitants pursue their present mode of life, imposed on them as it is by the necessity of the case. The population has no tendency to concentrate itself; each man, for the safety and welfare of his own property, is desirous to keep his neighbour at the greatest possible distance; and as his own property increases, and his household multiplies, he must seek for them some distant establishment. Many clever and well-meaning persons, not understanding the state and nature of a pastoral country, have given advice which, however well intended, can only have the effect of lowering their authority with the colonists, and of misleading the public at home. They have recommended, as a primary step to improvement, that the population should be concentrated, not considering that concentration is impossible, for to a pastoral population the condition of existence is dispersion.

Under these circumstances no plan has been proposed that holds out a better prospect of success than to establish a suf-

ficient number of clergymen, who, at stated periods, may visit the whole of the districts entrusted to their charge; and thus endeavour to revive the spark of religion which the cares of the world, under the most favourable circumstances, are only too powerful to smother; and how burdensome, how overwhelming are those cares to the settler struggling for existence in the bush of Australia!

Some difficulty no doubt would arise from the want of unanimity in religious opinions among the settlers. But under the peculiar circumstances, in the absence of all other religious aid, it may be hoped that most men would be inclined to consider rather the much in which they agree than the little in which they differ; and zeal, aided by charity, could not fail to do much.

Among the lower orders especially, very great obstacles to improvement exist. Even the more respectable, those who are not hardened by the habitual practice of gross vices, have long been disused to religious services, have grown up in religious ignorance, and are but little susceptible of religious impressions.

The clergyman would have an arduous, and often a repulsive task before him. The habits of constant change of service and residence would be at first a great obstacle to his making any lasting impression; but these difficulties would gradually become less as this love of change evidently arises in some measure from bad habits which it is his first object to reform.

He will need much patience, much forbearance, much Christian love, and the charity that "hopeth all things," that hopeth when there seems every reason to despair. He must proceed, like the Vicar of Wakefield in his prison, fortified by hope alone. There is always room for hope; the profligate ruffian is often nearest relenting when he seems most brutal; he is then, it may be, only endeavouring to harden himself against what he considers a rising weakness, and a little more perseverance, another word in season, may complete the conquest, in spite of the struggles of his worse nature.

But, above all things, it is necessary that the persons of better education should co-operate with the clergyman. Let every proprietor endeavour to be, like the patriarchs of old, the priest

to his own household, and, as far as the thing is practicable, the schoolmaster. The benefit to his own mind which he would derive from these attempts cannot be questioned; the possible benefit to those under his charge might be such as to animate the most indolent to exertion.

I have no doubt that to many these hopes would seem visionary, and these plans chimerical. But only let some one possessing the union of zeal and judgment make the attempt; the most scoffing and most worldly of his opponents would be silenced by even a partial success, and would admit that, in his own phraseology, his "speculation had answered" in the improvement of his servants.

So low a motive as mere worldly advantage is quite incapable of stimulating to such noble exertion; nor, if it were, would it lead to success; sincerity only can produce sincerity, and feeling awake feeling. I hope I have not expressed myself so as to convey any meaning derogatory to religion, as though it were designed to be introduced as an engine of government, and to make the clergy subsidiary to the police. But the cause of order and that of religion are united. It is a law of God's providence, and the remark is as old as Socrates, that the infringement of his commands carries with it its own punishment. Every guilty act does not, as far as we can see, bring its appropriate punishment, but sinful habits, we *can* see, invariably do; and on extending our views, we can still more plainly see that, in a large community, profligate habits, and a low tone of morality, bring on that community poverty and degradation.

These truths, commonplace as they are in theory, cannot be too often brought home in a practical form to the minds of the pious and well-disposed; and with the selfish and worldly they may prevail when even higher considerations avail nothing.

I wish to impress earnestly on the reader, and I would that my powers were equal to the importance of the subject, that, while there is much of evil in the state of society in the far inland districts of our colony of New South Wales, enough of evil to create alarm, yet there is enough of good to cheer with hope and stimulate to exertion. The evil is still of manageable extent. Government, aided by the exertions of British piety and munificence, may do much. They have already made a

beginning; they may supply yet further means, and hold out further encouragement. To carry out the work the settlers themselves must lend their best energies, and rely mainly on their own exertions.

CHAPTER IV.

Report of Bushrangers—Its effect in the Neighbourhood—The Discomfited Settler—An Unwelcome Visit—Buchan Charley—His History—Confessions of a Bushranger—The Mounted Police—Sequel of the career of Charley and his Gang.

THE reader has been told that, like other settlers, we had heard, on our way to our station, various alarming reports of bushrangers and their outrages. But after our arrival the subject was seldom mentioned, till at last one day, after many years of quiet had led us to look upon the existence of such things as merely “a tale that is told,” we received a most unwelcome piece of intelligence—there were actually bushrangers in our neighbourhood. They had made their first appearance at a station in our district a day or two previously, which they had pillaged, without, however, injuring any one in person, though report stated that they had threatened to shoot the stock-keeper, or, to use their own expression, to “put a ball into him,” for being backward in producing the saddle-horses.

It appeared that they were three in number, and that their ringleader was a man who had once been a hired servant in our district, on a station called “Buchan.” At that time he was honest and industrious, but had left his situation, and since then his character had rapidly changed for the worse; he had “got into trouble,” or, in other words, had been committed for trial for an offence against the law, had been sentenced to hard labour, but had escaped with one or two others from his “iron gang,” and, taking to the last resource of desperation, had now reappeared among the scenes of his former and better life, to become a general bugbear, under the denomination of “Buchan Charley” the bushranger—

“Timor atque infamia sylvæ.”

From this time forth all was anxiety: we lived in daily expectation of a most unwelcome visit, and were never suffered to

forget our danger for an hour. If anything went wrong upon the station, the same excuse was always at hand; if a party of strange horsemen were seen to disturb the cattle on the plains before us, "they were the bushrangers," of course; if the saddle-horses strayed away farther than usual in the morning, the stock-keeper would prematurely give up the search and return home in despair—"Buchan Charley had taken them;" and manifold as his depredations really were, many more, of which he was perfectly innocent, were laid to his charge.

But as a subject of conversation, the bushrangers were quite a boon to the whole population of the district: wool, colonial prospects, and the breeding of stock, were all laid aside for a time to make room for the discussion of the common enemy:—how long they were likely to be "out;" were the mounted police in pursuit of them; which of the neighbours, if attacked, would show fight, and so forth; these, and many similar speculations, were in every one's mouth.

Most people in the neighbourhood had, however, by their own account, received correct information of Charley's latest movements, and had devised some capital plan for defeating either a day or night attack. On every station the guns were discharged and reloaded every evening, and there was an accumulation of powder and ball sufficient for a tolerable garrison. It sometimes happens that matters are in this thoroughly defensive state, and the settler, chuckling over his precautions, is perhaps finishing his last cup of hyson, when he suddenly finds himself "covered" with the bore of a rifle, protruding through the window; his arms are close to him in a corner of the room; his ammunition is neatly arranged on an adjacent table, and to stir towards them is instant death. The mysterious stranger on the outside maintains his post until his companions have bound the victim fast to his chair, when he joins them in the work of pillage, and after taking what they please, and perhaps cutting many a rude jest on the unhappy colonist, they leave him to call the police at his leisure; to empty the barrels of his guns, now filled with water (in order to preclude the possibility of a shot in the rear as they are galloping away); to rearrange his house, and, if he thinks proper, to render it once more proof against "a visit from the bushrangers."

Mighty preparations have frequently ended no better than this ; and so it eventually proved in our case. About that time we might have been taken for gunsmiths instead of settlers, and I well remember a most romantic night that we passed, with all the furniture of the house piled up against the doors and windows, while we lay in arms on the bare floor, in expectation of our enemies, who, by the bye, we subsequently discovered were not at that time within many miles of us, and were little dreaming of the excitement they were creating at a distance.

At length, one evening, long after we had grown tired of the rumours of wars, and had discontinued all our preparations for defence, "Buchan Charley" came in person, accompanied by only one of his party, whom he stationed on the outside, while he himself undertook the head department, and acted as spokesman. Finding that no resistance was likely to be offered, for we were all, as he intended, taken by surprise, he behaved, on the whole, with civility and moderation ; for though he took all he wanted, including two of our best saddle-horses, for which he kindly left his own jaded animals in exchange, he committed no wanton damage, and refrained, and also compelled his companion, who was a ruffianly-looking Irishman of the lowest grade, to refrain from committing any personal outrage upon any one on the station ; and this forbearance has much merit in the case of a desperate man, who had already incurred the heaviest penalty of the law, and therefore cared little about further consequences.

He had lately been plundering a store, and was most bravely apparelled, better, in fact, than many of us whom he came to rob. His dress consisted of a new moleskin shooting-coat, a gaudy waistcoat, with a profusion of watch-chain, cord trowsers, and leather leggings ; and he wore a "cabbage-tree" hat, the ribbons of which streamed fantastically over his shoulders. A powder-flask was suspended at his side, two brace of pistols were stuck in his huge belt, and in his hand he carried a short and highly finished double-barrelled rifle, probably the favourite Manton or Nock of one of our neighbours. He was a tall, lathy-looking man, of about eight-and-twenty, and his countenance had an expression of calm determination, but of assumed recklessness rather than depravity.

"Well," said the bushranger, as he stalked into our little

abode, "I suppose you all know pretty well who I am, 'Buchan Charley,' as they call me. Now I'm not going to hurt anybody, if you're civil; but we want the money, arms, and horses; and those," he added emphatically, "we'll have. A nice place you've got of it here," said he, with a glance at our bookshelves; "I could stay where I am all the rest of my life." This seemed to remind him of the fearful uncertainty of its duration; for he looked grave, and for a minute or two laid aside his effrontery. In fact, all this volubility only betrayed the nervous excitement it was intended to conceal, or perhaps under which he unconsciously acted; for nervous he undoubtedly was, in spite of his assumed coolness. My leather hat-case attracted his notice; he cut asunder the band which fastened the top, evidently not in the spirit of wanton mischief, but because, in his agitation, he did not see the key, which was standing in the lock. His talk was chiefly apologetical, and calculated to regain, as far as possible, our good opinion. He rambled incessantly from one subject to another. The disjointed fragments of his conversation, when put together in a more connected form, gave us in substance the following history.

Ill treatment, he said, had brought him to his present situation. Having worked hard and steadily for several years, he had been paid by an "order," for which he could never get the cash, as the house in Sydney, on which it was drawn, had stopped payment, and he had no redress. So, finding that, in his opinion, "honesty was a fool," as Iago says, he tried its opposite, which soon brought him to a "road-party." There his punishment was extreme. Loaded with irons, working hard upon the sandy roads, beneath a burning summer's sun, with a diet of salt beef and "hominy," and not even a sufficiency of that, he could endure it no longer, and resolved to escape, or be shot in the attempt. He succeeded in communicating his intentions to a fellow-prisoner, who agreed to join him, and they resolved to "chance it" on the very next opportunity. It was some time before one presented itself, for between soldiers and overseers it was difficult to stir a finger without observation.

At length the moment arrived. They had been sent to work on a part of the road at some distance from the stockade, and, as luck would have it for them, the overseer happened to keep the

gang at work rather longer than usual, and it was dusk ere they returned ; so, on passing a "patch of scrub" on the road-side, they managed to slip into it unseen. Here they lay concealed for several hours, during which they could hear the soldiers from the stockade in pursuit of them ; but the night was so dark, and the "scrub" so thick, that there was little chance of their being discovered.

At midnight they ventured to emerge from their hiding-place, and repairing to a blacksmith in the neighbourhood, prevailed on him, partly by threats and partly by entreaties (the man having been himself a convict), to knock off their irons. Thus they were once more fairly at large ; but to set them up in their new line both arms and horses must be obtained. From a party of stock-keepers, whom they dismounted, they soon procured the latter ; and then galloping up to their station, got possession of their fowling-pieces, and thenceforth were thoroughly equipped.

And what sort of a life were they then leading ? was it a change for the better, even after the horrors of the "iron gang ?" No ; Charley confessed voluntarily that it was wretched beyond conception, and that, if he could have formed the least idea of what it was to be, he would rather have remained in his fetters. Lurking in caves and fastnesses of the bush, the very silence of which drove him to think—his greatest curse ; hunted day and night by the mounted police ; prevented from sleeping, or even taking a meal in security, by the knowledge that they were always on his track, with "his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him," he was now more like a wild beast than a human being, and the never-ceasing strain upon his mind was, he said, almost insupportable ; but it was then too late to retract.

Yet there was courtesy even among bushrangers. About two years before Charley had become what he was, I had met him on his way to a station where he had been hired, and had put him upon the right road. This he remembered, and though he was now under what, in a state of civilization, would be called the "disagreeable necessity" of taking one of my saddle-horses, he promised not to injure him, but to leave him where he might be afterwards recovered, all which he duly performed. Had I, on the above-mentioned occasion, ridden by without noticing him, he would probably have remembered that also, and, instead of leaving

my horse in a place of safety, would either have shot him, as he or his gang served many others, or put him in some inaccessible part of the country, where he might not have been found again. We never know, in this fluctuating sea of life, when, or in what manner, a civility may be repaid.

The mounted police, who, immediately upon a confirmed report of "bushrangers being out," are despatched in pursuit of them, with orders to capture or shoot them down wherever they can, have a most irksome and laborious duty to perform, rendered still more arduous by the difficulty of gaining correct information of their movements. The shepherds and stockkeepers, occupying the lonely out-stations, are the best authorities upon these matters, if they choose to be so; but it unfortunately happens that many of these men, who have themselves been "in trouble," have a secret leaning towards the runaways, or at least they remain neutral, and only see what they think proper, and this renders it very difficult for the police to worm out of them any intelligence upon which they can depend. The bushrangers, on the other hand, before they have been "out" very long, are sure to have correct informants in many quarters; thus it frequently happens that while the police, concealed on some adjacent spot, are watching a suspected hut, ready to sally forth and surround it on the arrival of the bushrangers, their track has been noticed by one of the inmates, through whose means intelligence has been conveyed to the enemy that "all is not right," and so the bushrangers keep away until they hear better news, and laugh in their sleeves at their misdirected pursuers. The bushrangers moreover are sure to be well-mounted, for they can take fresh horses from every station, whereas the police can seldom obtain a remount; and, in addition to this, the vast preponderance of energy possessed by men who are riding for their lives over those who pursue them for the ends of justice, gives them another great advantage.

"Buchan Charley" indeed talked with the greatest contempt of the local authorities: the commissioner of the district was an "old woman," and the mounted police a set of "harmless men," who could never get a glimpse of his party, nor dare to follow him, if they did, through the broken country to which he would betake himself.

After all, the reality of the unwelcome visit fell far short of the anticipation, and we suffered no great detriment from it; money we had none to lose, for it is an article seldom kept on an establishment at any distance in the interior, business being transacted by means of cheques and "orders" on Sydney. They took some articles of clothing; among other things, a new white hat of mine (from the hat-case before mentioned), which Charley wore with great satisfaction to himself, and which moreover was a mark that long served to distinguish him. The most annoying part of the affair was the conclusion, when we saw our unwelcome visitors scamper off, in a cloud of dust, towards the next station, mounted on our two best horses, which we had been keeping in condition for very different purposes.

In one instance only, while they were at our station, they threatened violence. They had met and dismounted the son of a settler who was much respected in the neighbourhood, but had restored him his horse upon hearing his father's name. This young man, more from love of adventure than anything else, joined the mounted police in pursuit of the bushrangers, who, upon ascertaining this, were much exasperated at what they considered unhandsome treatment, and sent him a laconic message, that, "if they came across him, he was a dead man."

The sequel of their history is soon told. After a career of ten months, they were at last very cleverly captured by the police, in an unguarded moment, when they had left their encampment, unarmed, in search of their horses. But as they were on their way to jail they managed to procure a handcuff-key at a station where they were halting for the night, and, simultaneously freeing their wrists, made a sudden attack upon their captors. Each party rushed to seize the muskets of the policemen, which were standing in a corner of the room. These in the scuffle were trampled under foot, and the contest was long protracted above them. The bushrangers were one less in number than their opponents, but by far the most powerful men, and were gradually getting the mastery, when the sergeant of the police, by a dexterous manoeuvre, succeeded in regaining his carbine, and in placing it at the head of his antagonist, the luckless Buchan Charley. This decided the event; two of the bushrangers surrendered; but the third, our Irish visitor, fairly fought his way

out of the place, and was not recaptured until some time afterwards.

They were tried at the ensuing assizes at Berrima ; accusers enough and to spare appeared against them, so we were saved the trouble of the journey and expenses of the prosecution—no slight matters in Australia, however amply they might have been repaid by hearing our old enemies convicted of “flat burglary,” and brought up to receive their fearful sentence, transportation to Van Diemen’s Land for life.

For a long time subsequently to their capture, it was quite a pleasure to awake in the morning, and feel that “the bush-rangers had been taken,” and that our supplies might thenceforth remain safe in the store, and our saddle-horses once more thrive for their owners.

Ill-fated Charley !—his unceremonious visit often recurred to our minds, and, bugbear as he was to us all, we felt something like pity for his fate, and gratitude to him for restraining his ruffianly companion, who richly merited his sentence. But Charley seemed capable of better things, as if, could he have retraced his steps, he would yet have repented him of the evil. Even when plunged in crime, beyond the pale of human mercy, he was not a hardened villain ; and for this reason the more bitter must be his remorse, as he now pays the lingering penalty of his last rash step, tempted by the bushranger’s motto, “A short life and a merry one.”

CHAPTER V.

Sheep Farming—Mode of Depasturing Sheep—Dislike of Shepherds to their Vocation—Appearance of a Sheep Station—Unsettled habits of its Inmates—Wages—Laziness induced by the Occupation—Shearing—Bush Shearers—Interior of a Wool Shed at Shearing Time—Conveyance of Wool to Sydney—Horse and Bullock Drays—Life on the Road—Return of the Teams—The Catarrh—Cause of the Disease—A Head-station during the Catarrh—Lambing Time—Management of the Ewes—Other Diseases among Sheep—The Scab—Causes—Mode of Cure—Difficulty of preventing Contagion—Regulations concerning Removal of Diseased Flocks—Footrot—Sheep the best Stock in the Colony—Advice to Purchasers of Sheep.

EVER since the earliest days of the colony, when the climate of Australia was found to be particularly suitable to the growth and improvement of fine wool, the value of sheep has always been steadier, and higher in proportion, than that of any other stock. A settler may take most pleasure in the breed of his horses, or the pursuit of his wandering and unreclaimed herds, but he feels that his main dependence for support lies in his flocks; give him a good lambing and a heavy "clip," and he looks upon the rest as a secondary consideration. Except the merino, few breeds have been tried, and none with equal success. Throughout the year the sheep are wholly supported and fattened for market on the natural grasses of the country, of which, except in cases of extreme drought, there is always a sufficiency; and, from the equability of the temperature, they require no housing nor any extra attention during the winter.

On the head-station, where the pasture is required for the use of saddle-horses and working oxen, sheep are seldom kept, but are "put out" in various parts of the run, at stations on which two or three flocks are depastured.

The number of sheep grazed together varies at different times, according to circumstances, of which the most pressing is the scarcity of labour, which compels the stockowner to put his sheep in larger flocks than his judgment would otherwise recom-

mend, as, when kept in smaller flocks, they thrive better, and yield heavier fleeces.

The want of labouring men, especially shepherds, has of late years been so severely felt by the colonists, that in some districts, where, a few years ago, the flocks seldom exceeded from five to eight hundred sheep, two thousand and upwards may now be seen grazing together. But this, of course, is practicable only in very open country. In "scrubby" or forest "runs" the shepherds would be unable to prevent a numerous flock from separating, and this, by exposing them to the ravages of the native dog, would entail certain loss.

For every flock two men are required, the shepherd, and another called the watchman, whose duty consists in taking care of the station, preparing the meals, watching the sheep at night, and shifting the folds every day. But the most usual, because the most economical method, is to keep two flocks at one station, and to fold them near each other at night, so that one watchman is sufficient for both; and thus, for their entire management, three men instead of four are employed.

Every morning, soon after sunrise, the shepherd sets out with his flock, which he follows without intermission during the whole day, keeping within certain limits pointed out to him by his master as the extent of his "run," and which if he wilfully transgresses he is liable, upon the second offence, to be fined by the commissioner of the district. He returns at sunset, when, as soon as he has seen his sheep safely in the folds, his day's work is over, and he resigns all charge of them to the watchman, who passes the night alongside the folds in a "watch-box." This is simply a sort of wooden frame, covered with hides, or the bark of trees, and standing about a foot from the ground, with an opening at one side large enough to admit a small mattress and blankets. Here the watchman, after tying up near the folds several of his "coolie" dogs, who will awaken him on the approach of a "warragle," or native dog, his only cause of alarm, rests well enough until sunrise; when he re-delivers his fleecy charge to the shepherd, and resumes his work as hutkeeper.

The sheep are counted out of the folds some two or three times a-week by the owner or superintendent, who rides over from the head-station for that purpose at a very early hour,

before they are let out of the folds. Each shepherd is accountable for his flock; and when any are missing through his negligence, is liable to have their value deducted from his wages.

While the shepherds of Spain are said to be so much attached to their own occupation that they could follow no other, in New South Wales the reverse is the case: although sheep cause the principal demand for labour in the interior, the majority of working men are averse to shepherding, as long as any other employment is to be got. It is remarkable that there is a feeling among them that it is the lowest sort of labour: stock-keepers, bullock-drivers, and farming-men of all kinds, though not receiving more, and frequently less wages than the shepherds on the same establishment, all consider their own line as in some way superior to that of the shepherd.

A shepherd's life in the interior of New South Wales is, it must be confessed, monotonous and uninviting in the extreme; a more unpoetical one can hardly be, in spite of Theocritus and Virgil: and it is the usual complaint of men who have followed sheep for any length of time, that the listlessness and inactivity produced by their mode of life gradually, but surely, unfits them for any other more laborious occupation.

The appearance of a sheep-station is but little in its favour; there are no "improvements" beyond a mere hut, and perhaps a small and ill-constructed milking-yard; the grass is almost invariably cropped off close to the roots for some distance round, giving a faded and barren appearance to the whole exterior; while the ground in the immediate vicinity of the hut is strewn with bits of sheepskin, strips of bullock-hide, and broken hurdles. Nor can much more be said for the comforts of the interior; its inmates, from sheer laziness, seldom care to make themselves even as comfortable as they might, or pay much attention to the cleanliness of their abodes; while it is remarkable that cattle-stations, occupied by men of a precisely similar stamp, and not better paid, are almost always comparatively neat and clean, and frequently very comfortable.

Shepherds are also more affected by the restless love of change than any other class of labouring men in the colony; a sheep-owner is seldom troubled with the necessity of raising his men's wages on the score of long service; and upon making inquiries

into the condition of a shepherd, you usually find that he is just then thinking of "bettering himself," by trying a new situation, or returning to an old one.

Their wages, however, are high—about 25*l.* per annum, with ample rations; so that steady men can generally lay by a considerable sum in the course of a few years. Married couples, with two or three boys old enough to work, can hire with sheep-owners upon the most favourable terms, as they can engage to shepherd and watch two flocks of sheep; they thus receive the pay of three men, and are rendered more than usually comfortable by having the use of a station to themselves.

Many stories were circulated in our neighbourhood to the prejudice of lazy shepherds, which was the epithet usually substituted for "gentle." It was said that a new comer to the country, travelling alone, lost his way, and fell in with three shepherds as they were lying at ease upon the plain, to whom he applied for information, with the stimulus of half-a-crown; but this, far from rousing them to the exertion he anticipated, merely extracted a few words from the first, a jerk of the elbow from the second, and from the third an inclination of the head in the right direction. Being a whimsical man, or thinking that where there was no industry to be had its opposite should be encouraged, he produced the reward with the intention of bestowing it on the most indolent of the three. The first man jumped up to receive it; the second held out his hand; while the third—he of the nod—merely pointing to his pocket, and saying, "Put it in here, master," received the reward, as the laziest of the lazy.

The most interesting time to the sheep-owner is the close of the year, though he may then expect to have his hands full of work, of which in a bush life there is no equable distribution; at one time there is a dearth of it, at another a superabundance. It is, however, merry Christmas in the bush of Australia, as in England, though in a different way. There is no wassailing, or gathering round the fire, with the thermometer at 90 and 100; but the approach of Christmas brings with it the harvest, and, most important of all, "the clip;" the shearing months being October, November, and December, varying with the climate in different parts of the colony.

Previously to shearing, in order to provide for the wants of the additional number of men employed, it is necessary to lay in an extra stock of supplies; by which, in bush parlance, are meant tea, sugar, tobacco, wheat, and beef, in addition to wool-packs, sheep-shears, and all other requisites for the "getting up" of the wool for sale.

Shearers are usually paid by the score, the price varying at different seasons from 2s. 6d. to 4s., according to the value of wool, and the demand for labour at the time. Out of this the shearer has to find his own rations and shears, which he purchases from the stores of his employer. It is also customary to allow the men two or three glasses of rum, both at the times of washing and shearing; in the latter case no unreasonable allowance, as they have to remain stationary in the water for several hours together.

The number of sheep daily shorn by professed shearers varies from 50 to 80. A man seldom "goes out" to shear if he cannot do at least as many as the former number, as he would lose by his contract. Now and then very fast shearers are met with, who can get through as many as 120 a-day; but these are very apt to work in a slovenly manner, and require such constant overlooking on this account, that they are often more troublesome than useful. A man who in one day can cut 80 fleeces properly is a very good shearer, and as fast as can be safely depended on.

The proprietor or overseer stands in the wool-shed during the whole time of shearing, and keeps account of the number shorn by each man, who, as he finishes his sheep, takes care to signify it to his employer; of whose business it is not the least important part to keep a sharp eye on each man, to prevent "racing," as in their endeavours to outshear each other they are apt to skip the wool nearest the skin, or, as it is called, the "bottom wool," which is the hardest to cut, but the most weighty and valuable. This trick they are certain to practise when under the eyes of some inexperienced man, or "new chum," who is thus an unconscious sufferer.

Whenever a fresh lot of sheep are put into the shearing-yards, there is at first a great deal of picking and choosing, each shearer aiming to get those sheep which have the lightest and most open

fleeces. The most closely-woolled animals are consequently left to the last; and it is curious to watch the manœuvres by which some tough-coated old wether is studiously avoided, as if by general consent.

As soon as the fleece is taken off, it is laid upon the "folding-table," which merely consists of some bars of light wood, set in a frame, and after being shaken, so as to let the dirt and coarser outside pieces of wool fall through on a heap underneath, (which is afterwards put together, and sold under the denomination of "clippings,") it is folded up neatly, and set aside to be ready for the press, which is in full operation throughout the day.

Australian wool is liable to be injured by the seed of the long grass, which is very troublesome just before shearing-time. To avoid this is a very essential part of the sheepowner's care, as the value of the fleece is greatly deteriorated thereby, for it cannot be wholly extracted by any subsequent process.

It is usually desirable to get the wool down to Sydney as soon as possible, as the price is apt to fall towards the close of the season; and it is therefore seldom kept upon a station after shearing any longer than the time occupied in loading the drays, mustering the working oxen, and making the various preparations necessary for a journey of perhaps two or three hundred miles. Each dray, drawn by eight or ten oxen, carries from fifteen to twenty bales of wool; the average weight of the whole load being about two tons. Horse-teams are sometimes used, chiefly near the capital, and on the farms in its vicinity; but, for long journeys, oxen are generally preferred. The former have the advantage of greater speed, especially in dry weather; but the latter have more power of resistance, and can better endure a long journey with wool, which, from the great height of the bales, sways very much from side to side in broken parts of the road, and is consequently a very fatiguing load. Horses are also less used on account of their greater value, which makes the loss of one or two of them a comparatively serious matter; and, in the long journeys from the interior, accidents may always be expected.

The bush-dray, the only vehicle used in New South Wales for the conveyance of wool and other produce, is open and low, more resembling a brewer's dray than any other description of

dray known in England. The pole and wheels, on which the most stress is laid, are made of the toughest wood of the colony, generally of box, or of "iron-bark." The other parts are of lighter wood. The bed of the dray is formed of broad slabs, placed about eight inches apart, as small articles are seldom carried on it. There are no sides, but upright pins and low guards of iron are placed at the corners and edges; to which a bulky load, such as wool, is fastened by the additional security of ropes or a wooden frame; while in wet weather a tarpawling is thrown over the whole.

In some districts, chiefly in the vicinity of Bathurst, shaft-drays are used; but pole-drays are found to be more suitable to the nature of the country. The price of a good pole-dray is about 14*l.*, exclusive of harness for the oxen.

During the long journeys to and from the capital, each team is entrusted to the charge of two men—the bullock-driver and his assistant, or "mate." These men, though they are in truth usually good customers at the wayside public-houses, have no need to visit them during their whole journey, as they can carry with them their own supplies, and every requisite for a journey of several months.

The life they lead is thoroughly independent. At the end of their daily stage of from twelve to sixteen miles, they draw up towards evening at a little distance from the road, in the vicinity of water and grass for their cattle, which require no additional food, and, from hunger and the fatigue of their day's work, are little inclined to ramble far before daybreak; by which time the driver is again upon their track, as an early start is half the battle, especially during the wool-season, when the summer's heat often necessitates a halt at noon. When two of these drays are travelling in company, one "mate" is sufficient for both, as his chief employment is merely to cook the meals, and take care of the drays in the morning while the drivers are absent in search of their oxen.

The men all sleep under the drays at night, when the ends of the tarpawling, which are rolled up during the day, are let down on all sides, and form a protection from the weather. The appearance of several drays, thus grouped together, is not unlike that of an encampment of gipsies.

When at length the wool is fairly off on its way to Sydney the settler feels his mind considerably lightened, and congratulates himself that his laborious life during the past year has not been spent in vain. His thoughts, however, are still dwelling on his teams, like those of a merchant on his ships; the time of their absence, the state of the roads, and the probability of accidents, are his frequent topics of conversation, until in the course of two or three months he again descries his dray in the distance, dragging its slow length along, with jaded bullocks, and every mark of a wearisome journey, bringing back, in a less bulky but more compact load, his supplies for the coming year.

The amount of these supplies is surprising and amusing to a new comer: half-a-dozen large chests of tea seem sufficient to last one's whole lifetime; and a ton of sugar is an inconceivable mass to one who has perhaps seldom seen a larger quantity than that contained in a china sugar-basin.

The scourge of the sheepowner is the catarrh; a disease peculiar to Australia, and of a nature so inexplicable, that it has hitherto baffled all attempts to discover either a prevention or a cure. It is not equally prevalent in all districts; some are visited by it nearly every year, some suffer from slight attacks, and in others it is as yet wholly unknown. It usually makes its appearance at the end of autumn or beginning of winter—that is to say, about March or April—which consequently becomes a very anxious time of year to the sheepowner, whose organs of sight and hearing are then most painfully acute. At this season his greatest bugbear is the arrival of a pastoral-looking man, with several coolie dogs at his heels, in whom, from as far as the eye can reach, he anticipates one of his watchmen, coming from the “Rocky Creek” or “Honeysuckle Flat,” to report the first appearance of the dreaded “catarrh.”

The principal symptoms are a discharge from the nostrils of a dark slimy matter, a drooping of the head, feeble gait, and loss of appetite; the infected animal lags behind, or separates itself from the flock, and dies, apparently in great pain, often within twenty-four hours from the time of its first seizure. The liver and stomach are, on examination, usually found in a highly disordered state. It is a most ruinous disease, not only from the number of animals it destroys, but from the consequent depre-

ciation of those it spares, as one of the first questions asked by a buyer of sheep is if they have ever had the catarrh? Nor do its effects cease even on its departure, for the sheep that have survived its attacks frequently lose the whole of their wool, which falls off their backs in flakes.

Among the most probable of the many causes which have been assigned of this capricious disease is the state of the stomach ; for it is remarkable that the sheep suffer most severely from its attacks in dry seasons, when the want of moisture in the grass produces constipation ; while a return of wet weather, or even a single shower of rain, which acts as an alterative, very frequently lessens, and often wholly arrests, the progress of the disease.

Whatever be its origin, it is certain that the settler is unable to stop its progress, and on its first appearance may always expect some, if not considerable, loss. All that can be done, however, he does : he hires more men ; skins the carcasses of the sheep, and boils them down for the sake of the tallow, so that he may at least save something out of the wreck ; and endeavours to persuade himself that the disease will cease at that indefinite period to-morrow, notwithstanding his secret misgivings, and wishes that his original capital were once more safe in his pocket. Any one who should happen to discover a cure, or means of prevention of this disease, might reasonably expect to realize a considerable sum of money in Australia.

Life at a stock establishment, when the catarrh is raging, is a very different thing from life at ordinary times. The usual air of repose, bordering on languor, which hangs over the residence of a settler, is exchanged for a continued bustle, impatience, and feverish excitement. There is a constant succession of horsemen hurriedly starting off in all directions to the various sheep-stations, and returning with evidently bad news, and no better tempers. The arrival of drays loaded with unsightly carcasses, " that do infect the air," and innumerable sheepskins hung around on every fence to dry in the sun, mark the ravages of the disease ; while at a little distance apart, in the vicinity of water, a column of smoke points out the situation of the boiling-pans, now the last resource of the unlucky sheepowner.

To him indeed it is a trying time, and no wonder if his courage is shaken ; he sees the fruits of perhaps many years' labour

and self-denial dissipated in the course of a few months, and his hopes of increasing the comforts of a bush life, or exchanging it for a more civilised one, placed further than ever beyond his reach by circumstances over which he has no control. He has the more cause for anxiety, since from the first appearance of the catarrh to its ultimate departure he can form no estimate of the probable extent of its ravages ; and unless he has very numerous flocks or other property to fall back upon, he has good reason to fear that he may soon wholly cease to be a stockowner.

But everything has an end ; the catarrh usually takes its departure at the approach of spring, which being also the lambing season, the prospect of increase revives the sheepowner's falling fortunes. At this season the ewe flocks require constant attention and additional labour for about six weeks, and various methods are taken to encourage the shepherds to more than usual exertion ; some sheepowners allow them a bonus of so much per head for all weaned lambs, or award a prize to the man who succeeds in rearing the greatest number ; and plans of this kind have generally been found successful.

At this time much rain is very destructive, as there is seldom any convenience for sheltering the lambs, which are all bred in the open air ; but if the weather is tolerably favourable, as is usually the case, strict attention and proper management are the best security for a good increase.

Besides the catarrh, sheep in New South Wales are subject to a few other diseases, though comparatively of minor importance, inasmuch as they are better understood, and admit of a cure. Of these the most serious is the scab, which, though not usually fatal, causes considerable loss to the sheepowner, both in the quantity and quality of the wool, the condition of the flocks, and in the necessity which it creates for trouble and expense.

Its primary cause seems to be a disease of the blood, which is often brought on in the first instance by folding the sheep too long upon the same spot, or by driving them into the pens at night in a heated state, by which means, if the ground should chance to be chilly and damp, the perspiration is checked, and cutaneous eruption superinduced. The value of a trustworthy shepherd is here very apparent, for the sheepowner is greatly at the mercy of his servant, who, if ill-disposed or

careless, may cause his master serious loss, with little danger of being detected.

Sheep affected with the scab are dressed with the mercurial ointment, as in England, or with a solution of corrosive sublimate; and it is expedient, if practicable, to remove them immediately afterwards to some new and healthy station, the only means by which a complete cure can be effected.

Some sheepowners have their sheep constantly rubbed over, or, as it is called, "spotted," with the ointment; but the best way is to dress the whole flock thoroughly directly after shearing; for which purpose some settlers, whose flocks are much infected, shear twice in the year, though this lessens the value of the wool.

When one flock is infected, it is no easy matter to prevent the disease from spreading, owing to the mode of sheep-farming pursued in the interior. The sheep-stations are seldom more than three or four miles apart, and are not divided by any enclosures or other artificial boundaries, so that the flocks are apt to run over the same ground on the borders of their respective stations; the more so as the shepherds are fond of getting together, for the sake of relieving their solitude by each other's company. When a sheepowner has a large extent of pasture land, the infected flock is put out alone at some distant station, and the shepherds are restricted to certain bounds on either side. But, in spite of every precaution, the chances are in favour of contagion spreading, as it can be communicated by the least accident, such as the straggling away of a single infected sheep, or the accidental removal of a few hurdles from the unhealthy station.

As a method of precaution against contagion, stockowners are prohibited, on pain of a heavy fine, from removing their sheep, when affected with the scab, from one part of the country to another, excepting at one season of the year. Were it not for this arrangement there would be no end to the disputes, damage, and consequent law-suits arising out of the injuries inflicted by a single diseased flock on its road to new pastures.

Foot-rot is occasionally met with in some districts, usually on rich soil and low, moist runs. In aggravated cases the feet swell out to a great size, the animal attacked is wholly unable to travel, and sometimes dwindles away to a mere skeleton, but the fleece

usually remains uninjured, and not unfrequently weighs half as much as the whole carcase. This is a troublesome disease, but comparatively of minor importance.

Upon the whole, notwithstanding their greater liability to disease, sheep are by far the best stock in New South Wales; and with tolerable success they hold out the most favourable prospects as a source of annual income. Owing to the mode of sheep-farming pursued throughout the colony, a large establishment, if properly conducted, can be managed with less proportionate expense than one on a limited scale; indeed, it is very questionable whether, all things being considered, sheep are an advisable speculation to a small capitalist. With success they will bring him the best and quickest interest for his money; but, owing to the smallness of his flocks, he must for several years run a considerable risk; as, by the attacks of catarrh or other casualties, they may be wholly annihilated, or so much reduced as to be insufficient in number to repay their expenses.

But both on a large and small establishment judicious and economical management is now indispensable. The once received notion that by sheep-farming in Australia it is easy, in the course of a few years, to make a fortune sufficient to enable the settler to return to England and live in luxury, has long been exploded as chimerical, if indeed it ever was formed on rational grounds; and the best advice that can be given to an emigrant of the present day, intending to become a sheep-owner, is to discard at once all extravagant ideas, to look forward to a permanent residence in the colony, considering his station as his home, and by making himself as comfortable as his situation will permit, to learn to be contented with that independence which, with perseverance and moderate success, he may yet reasonably expect.

CHAPTER VI.

Bush Cattle—Their interesting Habits—Rapid Increase—Mode of Management—"Tailing"—Powerful Instinct—A "rendezvous"—Number depastured together—A Muster—Speed of the Half-wild Cattle—Stock-horses—"Cutting Out" a Bullock—Bush Riding—Propensity of Cattle to acquire Bad Habits—Loss to the Owner occasioned thereby—Anecdote—A Muster by Moonlight—Interesting Scene—Application of the term "Quiet"—Habits of the Bulls—An Encounter upon the Plains—"Draughting" Cattle—Scene in a Stockyard—Description of a Cattle Enclosure in the Interior—Branding—Disadvantages in Selling—"Boiling Down"—Quality of Australian Cattle—Hints to Breeders.

THE management of cattle in New South Wales is conducted in a manner so peculiar to the colony, and so widely different from that of almost every other country, that some account of it may be amusing, if only from its novelty; but to one who is fond of observing animals, and of marking the difference that circumstances create in their habits, those of the bush herds in the interior of Australia are particularly interesting, the more so as many of them are unknown to those who have only been acquainted with cattle in a more domesticated state, and are evidently suggested by an admirable provision of nature, to supply the place of advantages from which they are excluded by the absence of the care of man.

Of the three sorts of stock which compose the principal wealth of Australia, viz., sheep, horses, and horned cattle, the increase of the latter has been in proportion the most rapid, and is truly astonishing if we consider how short a time has elapsed since the earlier days of the colony, when it must have been an easy morning's work to collect their whole number. Already they are countless; the census of stock, taken annually, must always be considerably under the reality, for few of the large stockowners keep an exact account of what they possess, and as it is next to impossible, owing to the wild habits of the cattle in New South Wales, to collect the whole of a herd at

once, the number driven into the enclosures at mustering time is necessarily set down as the total, of which perhaps it falls short by some ten per cent.; the census, moreover, only takes notice of cattle that are regularly branded and acknowledged by their owners; in addition to these innumerable animals of every kind of brand, and others with no brand at all, and known as "stragglers," are mixed with the herds in the interior. Of these some are wholly unclaimed, and others are the property of persons who have removed elsewhere, and are never likely to take the trouble of gathering them together, whilst vast quantities, wholly wild, roam at large in many parts of the colony, and occupy the most inaccessible places, being totally distinct in their habits from the half-wild herds, to which they originally belonged.

Cattle seldom get much credit for intellectual capacity, but no one who has seen them in the interior of Australia will deny that they have been undervalued in this respect; in the half-wild state their mental faculties seem to be called into more active play than when they are domesticated, and they exhibit strong powers of memory and combination, which, under many circumstances, are extraordinary: indeed the ox, though he has little more than half the brain of the horse, seems in point of instinct to be scarcely, if at all, his inferior.

The vast herds in the interior of the country graze unconfined throughout the year. With the exception of stock-yards, into which they are driven at certain seasons, there are no enclosures, and it is generally matter of surprise to strangers that without them they can be kept within due bounds. It would, in fact, be impossible to do so were it not for the strong local attachment they invariably possess, of which man avails himself so well, as not only to render them through it subservient to his will, but to be so voluntarily.

When cattle are first brought to a new country they are subjected to a process called "tailing," which consists in watching them with horsemen by day, and driving them into their enclosures every night: they grow very much out of condition under this treatment, but it must be continued as long as they show any inclination to ramble back to their old pastures, and usually lasts from three to five weeks, according to circumstances.

Cattle that have been brought overland from a great distance soonest lose the recollection of their former haunts ; and young stock are more easily managed in this respect, as their memories are less retentive.

The desire of returning to the pastures on which they have been reared, even though of inferior quality, is the most difficult to eradicate of all their bad habits, for they have been known to "make back" through every obstacle, for hundreds of miles ; and animals that have escaped from the very slaughter-houses in Sydney have been found again, within a short time, upon their former feeding grounds at a vast distance in the interior.

This instinct has occasionally been still more forcibly exhibited. It has sometimes happened that settlers, when removing their cattle to a new station, have taken the precaution of sending them by a circuitous route to their place of destination, by way of mystifying their troublesome organs of locality ; but it has afterwards been ascertained, both by the track and actual sight, that the stragglers, of which there are always a few, have returned by the direct line, through a country of which they had not the slightest previous knowledge.

Numberless well-authenticated anecdotes might be told of the topographical instinct of cattle, but I will only mention an incident of which I was an eye-witness. I was returning from an overland trip, and passed the night at an out-station, the occupants of which were anxiously awaiting the arrival of their supplies. These were always sent by means of pack bullocks, for the road was so mountainous as to be nearly impassable for drays. When on the point of resuming my journey on the following morning, the expected bullock was seen slowly approaching, with his load upon his back, but without any driver. We were now all anxiety for the man's supposed fate ; and as my road home was the same as that by which the bullock had arrived, the investigation of the matter was entrusted to me, so I got upon the animal's "back track," and pushed off as soon as possible.

Sixty miles from the station, as evening was closing in, I found the driver, alive and well, but in great tribulation at the loss of his charge ; and deep was his satisfaction when, in answer to his inquiries, I informed him that the animal, more sagacious than himself, had reached his journey's end in safety.

It appeared that he had missed the bullock on the previous morning, while he was halting for breakfast, and could not regain sight of him. Being a "new hand" in the country, he was an indifferent tracker, and had been wandering about in despair near the spot where he first lost sight of his charge, who, having been bred on the station, had pushed on alone, and reached it on the following morning.

I had kept his track all day, and found that he had never once been at fault, or even stopped to feed; and several articles, which had dropped from his load at different times, were all lying in the direct line.

Notwithstanding this strong propensity, cattle are made to forget their old pastures by means of judicious management, and to settle quietly upon any new station intended for them, if it is not wholly unsuited to their habits.

As soon as they seem reconciled to the new ground, and are again trusted wholly at large, they do not long remain in one herd, as during the time of "tailing," but separate into several droves, and spread here and there over the whole extent of pasture.

It is remarkable that each of these droves remains perfectly distinct from the others; and so strictly do they adhere to this habit, that, although several of them may chance to mix during mid-day in the dry creeks and open flats, to which they usually resort, and appear inextricably jumbled together, yet each animal well knows his own party; and it is very curious to observe the readiness with which, upon any sudden alarm, the droves detach themselves from each other, and make off towards the forest, each in its own separate direction. The knowledge of this habit is of great service to the stock-keepers or herdsmen of the colony, when they are in quest of any particular animal; for if they have once remarked the drove to which he belongs, they may always know subsequently in what direction he will be found.

The usual feeding times are in the morning and evening, and during the first part of the night; at mid-day they congregate on the low grounds in the vicinity of water, where each drove appropriates one particular spot, apart from the rest, from which it never deviates. Here they bask for many hours, lying closely grouped together until the heat begins to abate, when they draw off towards the forest in all directions, moving leisurely, and

grazing as they go. A numerous herd, thus spread out in the evening, and dotting the plain with party-coloured hues, forms a pleasing pastoral sight.

A spot on which cattle are thus in the habit of assembling and basking during the day is called a "rendezvous," and is easily known, for, from the constant pressure of innumerable vast bodies, the surface of the ground becomes smooth and hard, resembling a blighted ring in the midst of verdure; these marks still remain on stations from which the cattle have long been removed, and being seen from a considerable distance, are frequently used as a means of direction to the lonely traveller.

The number of cattle depastured together is regulated by no fixed rate. In the large grazing districts of the interior, herds are to be met with varying from five hundred to as many thousands, the only limit to their further increase being the extent of "run" possessed by their owners.

There are settlers who are owners of far more cattle, but 5000 is the largest number that I remember to have met with in one herd.

The breeding of horned cattle in Australia, though perhaps less profitable than sheep-farming, has the advantage, no inconsiderable one at this time, when wages are high, of requiring comparatively little labour. Two men, a stock-man and "hut-keeper," are all that are needed on a cattle station during the greater part of the year. The hut-keeper, as his name implies, has nothing whatever to do with the out-door work. This devolves wholly on the stock-man, to whose charge the herd is delivered in the first instance, and whose duty it is to be able to muster, or satisfactorily account for, the same number that has been counted out to him, together with their increase, whenever required to do so by his employer.

The muster of a large herd of cattle is a very stirring business, and may be described as a scene characteristic of "the Bush" of Australia. Preparations are made for a day or two previously, and word sent to the adjoining cattle-stations, as it is customary for neighbours to assist each other; and at such a time as this there can scarcely be too much help, the most indifferent performer on horseback serving at least to "stop a gap."

Operations commence at an early hour, as soon as the sun has

acquired sufficient power to draw the cattle from the forest towards the water. The horsemen separate into parties of two or three together, and skirt the boundaries of the pasture, driving down the cattle in every direction towards the "rendezvous" by crack of "stockwhip," an implement of peculiar construction, the handle being little more than a foot in length, while the thong, which is made of plaited hide, varies from twelve to seventeen feet; it is only used in New South Wales, and when cracked, makes a report which may be heard at a very considerable distance, while its powers of flagellation are formidable even to a wild bullock.

The cattle, thus roused, make off towards the low grounds, where they are met by other horsemen, whose business it is to keep them together upon the rendezvous until the whole party are reassembled, and then, after a few minutes' breathing time, they again start off for the enclosures. The labour now begins in earnest, for cattle seem to have some instinctive anticipation of what is in store for them, and when they are inclined to be refractory, nothing but the most persevering exertions will drive them to their place of destination.

As they proceed the scene becomes more and more animated. From the main body of the herd, dimly seen through a dense cloud of dust, a succession of furious animals break off on all sides, some making back towards the "rendezvous," others to their old haunts in the forest: these are instantly pursued, and hunted back by the stock-men, who may be seen belabouring them with their long whips in every direction, until, driven to desperation by over-driving and the severe discipline of the lash, they frequently turn the tables, and become themselves the pursuers. The air meanwhile is filled with the report of the stock-whips, the barking of dogs, and the cries and shouts of the men, mingled with the heavy, tramping sound of many thousand hoofs, as the herd rushes on towards the enclosures.

The speed and activity displayed by these half-wild cattle would astonish a stranger, who had been brought up in the belief that the ox is naturally a slow and clumsy animal. On a level plain, or down a gentle slope, which is most favourable to the action of cattle, it is often as much as a horse, and a tolerably fast horse too, can do to head some of them for the first hundred

or two hundred yards ; and as for agility, it is no small leap that a cow or bullock will “ refuse ” when hotly pursued. In many herds there are animals whom the enclosures will not hold, though six or seven feet high, even at a time when the yards are so filled with cattle that they are obliged to take a standing jump.

Some of them show excellent bottom, and instances are known of horses having been run to a stand-still by them even in open country. In addition to the gallop, which is their usual pace, they have a long, swinging trot, which enables them to get very fast over the ground.

Cattle-hunting in Australia is excellent sport, and many go out merely with the view to a day’s amusement ; with less speed than in horse-hunting, there is more variety, and from the constant sharp turning and close contact to which you are brought with the animal pursued, greater skill in the saddle is requisite. Serious accidents are not so frequent as might be expected, and generally occur from fool-hardiness or want of experience. However, it is never safe to trust the half-wild cattle too far ; if closely pressed they are always apt to wheel round and charge at a moment’s notice, when, as their pursuer is close behind, some disastrous accident may occur, if his horse should chance to be hard in the mouth, or unused to the work ; but this is seldom the case, for perhaps no animal in man’s employment more thoroughly understands what he is about than the “ stock-horse ” of New South Wales. From the earliest period of his breaking, he is taught to wheel instantly when at full speed, on any ground ; and from the innate sagacity which horses have in discerning their rider’s object, one that has been “ after stock ” for a year or two reaches such perfection in this point as almost to justify the ordinary recommendation of an Australian horse-dealer, that he can “ turn upon a cabbage-leaf.” The best exemplification of this faculty is in the process of driving, or, as it is called, “ cutting out ” a single bullock, to which he will not submit without a sharp tussle, from the instinctive dislike to separation which all the bush cattle exhibit. At first starting he trusts wholly to his speed, but finding, after a trial of two or three hundred yards, that his retreat to the herd is still intercepted, he doubles short round in the rear of his pursuer, who, were he to continue his onward career, would thereby lose a great

deal of ground ; but such is the agility of the stock-horse that he simultaneously wheels round, and still keeps on the inside, without losing an inch : this sort of thing is repeated again and again, until the baffled animal, by this time exhausted with rage and well scored with the whip, is fain to single out, and take any course that his tormentor may direct.

The purchase and wear and tear of working horses, and of saddlery, forms a considerable item in the expenses of a cattle-station. A stock-keeper in charge of a large herd must be supplied with three or four good horses throughout the year, and at busy times, such as mustering, branding, &c., more are required. The best horses seldom hold out long, as their work is peculiarly distressing ; from constant sharp turning when at speed, they are always liable to strains, and their fast down-hill galloping, which is rendered necessary by the invariable propensity of cattle, when pursued, to take the falling ground, divides the weight unfairly, by throwing it all upon their fore-legs, which seldom remain sound after two years' work. But this is a secondary consideration ; where horses are so plentiful much trouble is seldom taken to cure an old one, which consequently has to work on, whether sound or unsound, as long as he can " head a bullock."

This sort of riding is at first very difficult, even to one who has long been at home on his horse under other circumstances ; the stock-keepers are generally well practised in it, and, indeed, as it is their trade, one that was not so would be useless. Their style of riding, however, does not exactly answer the usual idea of excellence : they have generally a long and loose seat, with the foot home, and the toe pointed to the ground in a line with the knee, and they have seldom a good hand on their horse ; but notwithstanding this they are very expert at sticking on under difficulties, and have a most astonishing knack of getting along fast in broken country, and especially down hill, in which perhaps they are unequalled. The native youths particularly excel in bush-riding, to which they are accustomed from boyhood, and pride themselves not a little upon their feats while " after stock." Early practice, however, is not indispensable ; many stockowners who have arrived in the colony late in life, become themselves excellent cattle-hunters ; and one of the best I remember to have

seen was an ex-pickpocket from London, who before he was transported had hardly ever been in the saddle.

The half-wild cattle have a constant tendency to acquire bad habits, or what a sportsman would call to run riot, and to counteract these forms a great part of the stock-keeper's daily labour, as any of them, if confirmed by time, become insurmountable; and then the only remedy is removal to new pastures, which is an expensive affair, and not always practicable. The most frequent and troublesome habit is that of breaking off from the main body, or "splitting;" this, if not checked at first, gradually spreads through the whole herd, and is so infectious, that if a single animal, when the herd draws near the enclosures, singles off, and is not soundly hunted back there and then, he is pretty sure to repeat it on the next occasion, with the additional annoyance of taking several others in his company. The memory of the half-wild cattle, which is at all times retentive, is never more so than under these circumstances: they seldom forget a bad trick, if once found to be successful. The value of a herd of cattle is of course considerably lessened by these refractory habits, as they necessitate a great addition of horses and labour.

As an instance of the extent of annoyance to which this evil may come at last, I may mention what occurred on a station in one of the large grazing districts to the southward of Sydney. On and about the pastures, which were very extensive, there were supposed to be about 4000 head of cattle, speaking in round numbers, or, as the auctioneers say, "more or less," for, as will be shown by the sequel, they were more easily seen than counted.

From original mismanagement they had become so wild, and had acquired so confirmed a habit of "splitting," that to muster them was an impossibility; and notwithstanding that all the assistance was obtained that could be got for love or money in the neighbourhood, often amounting to treble the number of horsemen usually requisite in such cases, the party considered themselves lucky if they reached the enclosure with a third of the drove with which they had started from the rendezvous, a distance of three or four miles, the whole extent of which presented one continued scene of confusion, covered with men galloping helter-skelter after numberless cattle, which were making off at all points, determined to go in every direction but the right one.

The luckless proprietor of this lively stock, a man well versed in such matters, tried every scheme that long experience could suggest to gain the control once more over his cattle, but in vain; and, in short, to use the colonial expression, "they would not have gone into the enclosures for the governor and all the legislative council." His last attempt to muster them, at least showed that his failure did not arise from lack of energy. Finding that his cattle had become too cunning by day, he resolved to try if he could not outwit them in the dark, and laid his plans accordingly. It was arranged that the pastures were to be undisturbed during the day, but shortly before sundown the whole party were to sally forth as silently as possible, driving before them some quiet cattle, which, being thoroughly under control, might be easily driven into the enclosures, and thus serve as a decoy for the wild herd.

I forget how it happened, but so it was, that business took me in that direction with one companion, and as we were pushing on across the bush, unconscious of the busy times that were awaiting us, we came full upon the party in question, where they were encamped at sundown, at a distance of four or five miles from home, eager for nightfall to open their campaign. As we were neighbours, and, what was more to the purpose, well mounted, our arrival was hailed with joy. We were pressed at once into the service, and thus we had an opportunity of witnessing, and taking part in, a scene which was unusual, even in a country so thoroughly pastoral as Australia—a "muster by moonlight."

Accustomed as we then were to life in the interior, this sort of work differed as much from anything we had previously seen in the usual routine of cattle-hunting as night from day, and no less different was the plan of operations. All noise was strictly prohibited; the crack of the stock-whip, which by day is indispensable, would here have been treason; and we hardly ever had occasion to put our horses into a gallop, but placed all our hopes upon stratagem.

Driving the decoy-herd before us, we skirted the edge of the plains, and whenever we were led to suspect the vicinity of other cattle, we halted, and, dismounting, so as to be less liable to observation, awaited their arrival in silence.

It was seldom long before the lowing of our decoy-herd was answered from the distant forest, and presently the wild cattle would come down from all quarters, and mixing with the others, were driven on with them quietly enough towards the enclosures, which, suffice it to say, we reached at length with a large number of cattle, which for once were outwitted; and on the following morning we left their owner in a state of great satisfaction at having at length hit upon a plan for surmounting his difficulties, though at the cost of turning night into day.

Cattle-hunting had long ceased to be a novelty to any of us, but I well remember how highly interested we were with the whole scene. The night, as is usual in Australia, was fine and clear, and as we proceeded, gradually increasing the size of our drove, we could plainly distinguish the evolutions of the wild cattle as they mingled with ours, and mark their vast bodies "darkling" amidst the trees, their innumerable horns glancing in the moonbeams, and hear the quick tread of their hoofs upon the sward; sometimes a few, more wary than the rest, would join us, and then, as if suspicious of foul play, would single off again towards the forest, for which we had no preventive, as silence was our cue, and the pursuit of them might have alarmed, and occasioned the loss of, the whole. Sometimes a bull, roaming alone through the pastures, would enter our ranks, and long ere he came in sight, his varied tones, now sullen and deep, then rising into a shrill scream, clear as a bugle, until they died away in wailing notes, would announce his approach from a considerable distance.

This is one of the most melodious of Australian pastoral sounds, particularly on a calm night, when it may be heard, awakening the echoes for miles round, through the deep glens, and pathless solitudes.

I was sorry to hear afterwards that the scheme commenced so auspiciously, proved eventually a failure; the cattle, with their usual sagacity, penetrated it in a short time, and thenceforth it was all lost labour, and their unfortunate proprietor found himself once more in *statu quo*. As an expiring effort, he erected enclosures of extra strength and height, and at no little cost, in that very part of his station towards which the refractory animals had always been observed to shape their course; but this plan

fared no better than the rest, and at the last muster there was a deficiency of about 500.

When cattle or horses are spoken of in New South Wales as being "quiet," the word must always be understood with some latitude, as no comparison can be fairly made with stock that is kept under confinement; many herds that might well be considered dangerous in more civilized situations, are looked upon in the colony as rather docile than otherwise, and it is decidedly amusing to witness the cool way in which a new-comer is informed, seemingly against the evidence of his calm senses, that such and such cattle are "not wild," which indeed an animal is seldom allowed to be, in the interior of the country, except one that, in colonial parlance, would "run at a musquito."

The bulls are permitted to remain with the herds during the whole year, but they voluntarily single off during the winter months, and retire to some dry creek, or "gully," in the forest, where they remain in solitude, and rejoin the herd at the beginning of spring. Their contests, if they meet at this time, are desperate. Bulls of the same herd seem to have forgotten each other during the interval of separation, and severe, and even mortal injuries are often the result of an encounter.

A bull is at all times a lordly animal; but when roaming unconfined, as in Australia, there is a dignity and freedom in all his movements which a state of domestication does not develop, and it is remarkable that, wild as is the nature of cattle in New South Wales, the bulls are seldom vicious or dangerous, even in spring, when in England they are not often to be trusted.

Their senses of sight and hearing are very acute, and it is interesting to watch the sudden change which comes over a bull, when, as he basks on some vast plain, in the midst of his harem, he hears in the distance the deep note which announces the vicinity of a rival. At the first sound he springs up and looks eagerly round in quest of his foe, while with his loud and angry roar he seems to caution him against a nearer approach; at sight of each other their rage increases, and, like the Baresarks of Gothic story, they seem to be preparing for the combat, by lashing themselves into a state of frenzy, throwing up the dust into the air with their hoofs, digging up the turf with their horns, and even going down on their knees in their excitement,

as if, in imagination, they were already trampling each other under foot. All this time they are gradually approaching to a distance of five or six yards apart, when each draws himself up, and stands for a minute or two, "collecting all his might." There is something positively sublime in this pause, which makes the ensuing rush still more terrific. At length they close, with an impetus which, but that their foreheads are of the hardest, would be sufficient to split them both, each manœuvring to get the advantage of the upper ground, and bringing either horn to bear alternately upon his adversary, while the noise of the contest may be heard at a great distance, for the rest of the cattle, well knowing what is going on, run bellowing from all directions towards the scene of action, and surround the combatants, who thus fight, as it were, in a ring. When they are evenly matched, the event is long dubious; but if one of them gains the flank of his antagonist, he is nearly sure to injure or upset him, and a bull is naturally so spiteful, that if he once gets his adversary down, he frequently continues to gore and trample him for a long time after all resistance has ceased, as if his rage were not to be satiated by submission, or even by death.

It is very annoying to the settler, in the course of a ride over his "run," to find his best bull, perhaps recently purchased for a good round sum, at his last gasp. Fortunately this does not happen very often: the weaker or less skilful animal, finding his efforts unavailing, generally rushes away with a dismal roar, "*multa gemens ignominiam*," and is pursued, not only by the victor, but by many of the other cattle, who, like true courtiers, have been waiting for the issue of the contest before they declare for either party. The conqueror then takes possession of the disputed herd, while the beaten bull wanders off alone across the plain in search of other cattle, being at such times most dangerous to meet with, except in the vicinity of some rock or tree, which may serve for a means of escape.

The most disagreeable, as well as the most laborious work connected with cattle farming in Australia is that of "draughting," or separating and classing a herd, which is necessary at certain times of the year, especially when any are to be sold, or removed to fresh pastures. It is, properly speaking, part of the stock-keeper's duty, though many settlers go through it all in

person, being fond of the excitement of the business, which indeed requires both nerve and activity. A cattle enclosure is usually subdivided into five yards: two of them facing the entrance are large, the three others are smaller; the former are known as "receiving," and the latter as "draughting" yards, all of which communicate with one another. The whole herd are first enclosed in one of the large yards, and thence as many are forced into one of the smaller as will about half fill it; the gateway is then closed behind them, and those leading to the other divisions are thrown open, at each of which a man is stationed, armed with a "waddy," or green sapling, about as thick, and four times as long, as an Irish shilelagh, and operations then commence. It is no easy matter to part the cattle in the first instance, as they instinctively keep close together, and will not single out, except on compulsion; and when at length an animal is forced to do so, he is usually well belaboured, and makes for the nearest gateway, literally "like mad." If this happens to be the right one, he is suffered to pass unscathed, but if otherwise, he receives such a rap upon the head from the "waddy" of the man who is defending the gateway, that he is fain to turn tail and try his luck elsewhere, and he is thus bandied about, amidst blows and shouts innumerable, until he takes the right direction.

As the numbers in the draughting-yard diminish, the risk increases, for the wildest of the cattle remain among the last, and when compelled to leave the rest, frequently charge through every obstacle into one of the wrong yards, whence they are dislodged with still greater difficulty. The chief share of the danger falls upon the draught, who has to go amongst the cattle in the first instance, and being sometimes threatened on all sides, should be a very Argus of watchfulness. When pursued, he makes for the nearest part of the fence; but when there is not time to reach it, he throws himself down upon the ground, and lets the infuriated animal pass by or over him. The other men, meanwhile, who are stationed at the several gateways, have no sinecure, especially when three or four animals rush together pell-mell towards an opening, through which only one, perhaps, is to be allowed to pass, and the others are to be stopped, almost at the same moment.

Practice, however, does wonders; and the stock-keepers,

whose chief recommendation for employment, next to bold riding, is that of being "good men in a yard," display wonderful agility and indifference to danger, drawing aside to let an animal go by, then springing back again almost simultaneously to stop the rest, with a dexterity in the use of their "waddies" that would do credit to a Spanish matador.

A stock-yard, or enclosure for cattle and horses, which no station in the interior of Australia is without, is usually erected on a flat, or gentle slope, in the vicinity of good riding ground, so that the animals, when breaking off, as they are particularly apt to do at the entrance, may not have the advantage of broken country on their side. The fence is five-barred, and of very strong construction, for otherwise it would be unable to sustain the vast pressure to which it is subjected when filled with the half-wild cattle.

It is built entirely of wood, strong rails of which are firmly driven into mortised posts, sunk in the ground to the depth of three feet and upwards, and rammed down hard at the butt end. Nails are not used in any part of it. The timber generally preferred is the stringy-bark, blue-gum, or mountain ash.

The size of an enclosure varies with the quantity of stock it is intended to contain, as, being an expensive structure, nobody builds a larger one than he actually requires. A space of about 14 roods in length by 12 in breadth, will contain some 800 or 1000 head of mixed cattle.

One of the smaller enclosures is used as a branding-yard, and here the young stock are branded with the initials or mark of their owner. No two proprietors residing in one district are allowed to use the same brand, and it is the business of the new comer to make inquiries on this point, so as to avoid all risk of confusion of property.

Two side fences, called "wings," are carried out in front of the enclosures, extending to a distance of 10 or 12 roods. These are sufficiently wide at the outer extremities to admit at once the whole herd of cattle, but they gradually become narrower towards the gateway, and are of great service to the horsemen when riding in the cattle, by concentrating them, and preventing them either from breaking away at the sides, or running past the entrance.

Calves are branded at any age under six months, for when the

herd is numerous or refractory they must be caught when they may. The roughness of the stockmen's proceedings can be equalled only by its rapidity—hundreds of calves are roped, mutilated, and branded in a day. The stock-owners never seem to apprehend any ill effects from this hasty treatment, or, if they do, they have obviously made up their minds, in the colonial phrase, to "chance it."

The fence of the branding-yard is more closely constructed than that of the other divisions, and is provided with what is called a "branding panel," which is, in fact, a sort of screen, behind which the men take refuge, if suddenly charged by an infuriated animal.

The markets in Sydney are very fluctuating, and much of the settler's success depends upon his bringing his stock to market at the proper moment. The detention of a week, or even a day, on the road, has been known to make an important diminution in his profits. The wholesale butchers, who are the principal purchasers, combine to keep down prices, and to oblige the seller to part with his stock on terms which they themselves have fixed. The stock-owner or his agent, when within a day or two's journey from Sydney, and as yet ignorant of the current prices, is met by a butcher, who inspects his stock, and concludes by making him an offer. If he declines it, he is accosted, in due time, by another confederate, who offers him still less; this, of course, he also refuses, when shortly a third comes to him with no higher terms, and so on. By this time he is full of nervous perplexity, and returns to the man who made him the first offer; but it is then too late—the first bidder will either make no offer at all, or bid still lower than the rest; and thus the settler is bandied about like a shuttlecock, until he is reduced to such a state of anxiety and mortification that he is glad to take anything he can get.

Sometimes, however, it happens that these plots are unsuccessful. I remember a particular occasion on which some cattle were brought to Sydney from the interior in excellent condition, and as there were no others to be procured at the time, they were very much sought after. They were worth about ten pounds each, a large price in Australia, where a fine ox is often sold for thirty shillings, and good beef may be bought for 1*d.* per pound. The

butchers, as usual, combined together, and agreed to offer not more than eight pounds, with which intention three or four of them sought out the owner. He, on his part, took some time to consider the proposal, and while he was doing so, the plot was discovered. Another of the purchasers, in his eagerness, made a higher offer, for which breach of agreement he was summarily knocked down by the first spokesman, to the astonishment of the unsuspecting settler, who, being thus put into possession of the real state of affairs, was enabled to retaliate on the purchasers, and obtain his own price.

In addition to the demand for colonial consumption, and for salting, a new market for the surplus stock has been found within the last few years, by the discovery of the process of "boiling down," or converting the whole carcase into tallow. He who first put this plan into operation deserved the thanks of all the colonists, for had not this method, or some equivalent to it, been invented, cattle and sheep must soon have become almost unsaleable, as the supply had so greatly exceeded the demand, whereas now, though the colonial market should be overstocked, the animal, whether sheep or ox, is at least worth its hide and tallow for exportation.

"Boiling down" is a very simple and rapid process. The whole carcase, having been cut up into pieces, and thrown into large cast-iron pans, each capable of containing several bullocks, is boiled to rags, during which operation the fat is skimmed off, until no more rises to the surface. The boiled meat is then taken out of the pans, and, after having been squeezed in a wooden press, which forces out the remaining particles of tallow, it is either thrown away, or used as food for pigs, vast numbers of which are sometimes kept in this manner, in the neighbourhood of a boiling establishment.

The proprietors of these places will either boil down the settler's sheep and cattle at so much per head, or purchase them wholly from him in the first instance, and convert them into tallow at their own risk. The value of an animal for this purpose depends of course entirely on his condition, and usually varies from 30s. to 3*l.* 10s.

Horned cattle will reach a high pitch of perfection under the climate of Australia, in the hands of an experienced breeder.

Pure animals of several breeds have always been imported from England, and, on the whole, no sort is so popular, or found to combine more of the necessary qualifications, than the improved short horn, of which many colonial bred specimens are to be met with, that might well compete for a prize at some of our most important shows.

Though to capitalists now visiting the colony for the purpose of engaging in pastoral pursuits, a speculation in cattle does not hold out such advantages as sheep farming, yet there is less risk connected with it, and it may be particularly recommended under certain circumstances. The profits of a cattle station very far inland must always be much lessened by the expense and loss of condition of the stock, attending long overland journeys to the capital. But if, on the other hand, a good and tolerably quiet herd can be purchased, together with a station which has been ascertained to be capable of fattening readily, in the vicinity of the coast, so as to command facilities for shipping live stock to the various colonial markets, and also for salting beef, most favourable results are attainable, without calculating on any unreasonable share of good fortune.

CHAPTER VII.

The Half-wild Horses of the Interior—Roving Mode of Life—Local Attachments—Appearance of a large Herd on the Plains—Entire Horses—The Vicious Habits they occasionally acquire—Anecdote—A Bush Incident—Value of a good Saddle Horse—"Buckjumping"—Mode of Breaking Young Horses—Roping a Coit—Horse-hunting—Irreclaimable Herds—A rash Speculation—Quality of Australian Horses—Advice to Breeders.

THE half-wild, or bush horses, bred on the large grazing districts in the interior of Australia, differ greatly in their habits from those in a state of domestication, and their treatment, which is similar to that of the horned cattle, produces similar results. The natural grasses of the country being sufficient to keep them in condition both in summer and winter, they never require any additional food from their owners, but are suffered to roam at large within certain limits, and are brought back to the enclosures "en masse," whenever they are wanted, either for the purpose of branding the foals, or taking out colts and fillies for breaking or for sale. They are driven in more or less frequently according to circumstances; those herds that show symptoms of running riot and getting out of control, by rambling beyond the bounds of their owner's pastures, require to be ridden in constantly, while those that remain contented upon their feeding-grounds are often left undisturbed for many months; the stock-keepers to whose charge they are entrusted, use their own judgment in this matter, and treat them accordingly.

Nothing can be more congenial to their natural disposition than the wandering life they lead in New South Wales; at one time revelling upon a bank of wild oats, at another trooping off to a patch of "burnt feed" (as the young herbage is called which springs up on the spots where the old grass has been set on fire), to-day resorting to some well-known haunt, "to-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new;" now slaking their thirst *ad libitum* in some cool stream or gushing spring, or shunning the noon-

day heat beneath the shady honeysuckle or feathery mimosa. As they roam across the boundless plains there is a freedom and elasticity in all their motions which domesticated animals seldom exhibit ; and yet, in the midst of one's admiration of such a scene, it is painful to mark the contrast between the fine promising colt, as yet "by spur and bridle undefiled," and some broken-kneed and wind-galled stock-horse, who has for a time rejoined but finds it difficult to keep pace with his old associates.

Their rambling propensities are, however, as in the case of cattle, counteracted by the strong attachment they acquire to any spots on which they have been depastured for a time, but especially to the places where they have been bred : were it not for this, the trouble in keeping them within reasonable bounds would be endless, and even as it is, when horses are removed from pastures on which they have been reared, they must be closely watched for some time subsequently, or they will ramble back again from incredibly long distances, having been known to make their way home, through every obstacle, for 300 miles.

From the mode of life they lead, restrained in their wanderings by no bounds, unaccustomed to the hand of man, and not dependent upon him for food, they learn to look upon him with alarm and suspicion, and it requires some manœuvring to approach them without creating a premature panic. A stock-keeper would be able to go through the midst of a herd without causing much disturbance, while a stranger to their habits would disperse them at once by his approach. It requires a kind of craft to make them imagine you have come among them accidentally, and not for any ulterior purpose, as they have a most feminine instinct in guessing "what your intentions are ;" and if they suspect you are come for the purpose of driving them into the enclosures, they make off at once, thereby defeating your first object, which is to make sure, before you start, that the animal you are in quest of is amongst them.

On the approach of a horseman, one or two on the outside sound an alarm, and make off towards the rest, who thereupon rush together, and a general concentration takes place. It is a fine sight to see a large herd of these horses, of every size, age, and colour, mustering in this manner from hill and valley, as if by common consent. Though physically very powerful, they

assume no threatening aspect : their safety lies in their speed ; and as they eye the suspicious object, their meaning is obvious—they say, as plainly as looks and gestures can say, Now what do you want? If you are a stranger, pass on quietly ; but if you are for a gallop, we are quite ready to try of what mettle that horse of yours is made.

It might naturally be supposed that animals thus unencumbered would be able to distance one of their own species with the disadvantage of weight on his back, but the reverse is usually the case.

In every herd the entire horse is suffered to remain at large throughout the year, and has often great influence upon the movements of the rest, over whom he reigns paramount and supreme ; he watches them with a jealous eye, allows no rival to approach with impunity, and is evidently conscious of, and pleased with, his guardianship. Those who have long lorded it over their fellows acquire at times eccentric and fanciful habits : some of them will allow neither any addition to nor separation from their own particular herd, bringing back instantly those who show a wish to straggle away or lag behind, and foiling any attempt of a strange horse to join company, by hunting him backwards and forwards, always keeping on the inside, and interposing between him and the rest, with fierce and menacing gestures, until the intruder is glad to seek quarters elsewhere—in short, “cutting him out” as well as could be done by the most expert cattle hunter.

Occasionally they become vicious, and will not hesitate to attack a horseman, if he ventures too near their herd, laying back their ears, and charging him open mouthed ; this, however, is of rare occurrence. A more common, though less natural habit, is that of destroying foals : this is a ruinous vice, and most unaccountable : horses that acquire it are removed at once from the pastures ; but they cannot always be detected, the native dog, and other causes, being often wrongfully suspected in the first instance. I knew a stockowner in one of the southern districts, who kept a numerous herd of mares, amongst which he had lately introduced a promising horse ; some months afterwards he visited his station, when he made the usual inquiries of his stockkeeper concerning the state of his stud, and was in-

formed that, owing to a drought, they were all rather thin, except the new horse, whose condition was excellent, "and," added the man, "it's no wonder, for he eats all the foals;" and in short it turned out, to the dismay of the proprietor, that although he had not actually eaten, yet he had destroyed all that he could lay hold of, which did not except many.

This extraordinary propensity is usually peculiar to horses which have long been running at large, but this is not always the case, for I remember a remarkable instance of it in an animal that was constantly worked. He was tethered in his owner's paddock, when a man leading a large Clydesdale mare, with her young foal, passed within reach of his rope; the horse, seeing the foal within the length of his tether, immediately seized him, threw him down, and would have killed him in a very short time, had it not been for a lucky thought which struck the groom, who, guessing from the violent efforts made by the mare to break away, that she would best defend her offspring, slipped the halter from her head, when she attacked the enemy with such fury that she beat him off, and saved her foal from the jaws of destruction.

The half-wild herds are necessarily kept separate from the saddle-horses and those that are used for the daily work on the station; these are not allowed to ramble far, but are taught to remain within two or three miles of home, which, in New South Wales, is considered a very moderate distance. They are, however, always apt to mix with the rest, and this inclination which they retain for each other's company is a frequent source of annoyance to the settler. A visit to a sheep-station being necessary on the following morning, he gives orders to his stock-keeper to have the saddle-horses at hand by an early hour. After dressing and breakfasting in a hurry, he finds that his man has been out since daybreak, but has not yet returned, and accordingly is fast losing his temper, when to his great joy he discerns him coming at a brisk walk, and driving the horses before him. Inwardly congratulating himself that there is still sufficient time left to reach the sheep-station by the appointed hour, he arranges along the fence his saddle, bridle, stockwhip, &c., so that not a moment may be lost. By this time the saddle-horses are close at hand, the lapse of a few minutes will see

them safe in the stockyard, when suddenly a rumbling noise is heard, and from some unexpected quarter a herd of unbroken horses "come quickly thundering on;" these, neither knowing nor caring whether the saddle-horses are wanted or not, at one fell swoop take off the whole of them, nothing loth, in their company, leaving their owner to chew the cud of mortification and to speculate whether they will continue their onward career for two miles or five. As the climax of his distress he remembers that his best stock-horse having been "hobbled" on the previous evening to prevent him from rambling too far, cannot fail to cut his fetlocks severely in his violent efforts to keep pace with the rest, and when he is brought home again will probably be unserviceable for several days.

The value of a good saddle-horse can nowhere be more thoroughly appreciated than in the interior of Australia. In more civilized countries, if anything goes wrong with one's steed, there is no difficulty in finding other modes of conveyance, but the settler is like an Arab, wholly dependent upon his horse; with him he is free as air, without him little better than a fixture. He feels uneasy when his horse is not to be found, even though he should not happen to be in want of him at the time; he looks upon any accident that may befall him as a most serious matter, and would even let you meddle with his purse rather than his stud. A good hack is the first thing he purchases in prosperity, and the last that adversity can wrench from him. In fact the settler's home is in the saddle; and though he never actually goes out for a ride, which would be as great an anomaly as a Lambeth waterman taking, for his private pleasure, a row upon the Thames, yet he does so because it is necessary to his vocation, and forms part of his daily labour. He betakes himself to the saddle in as business-like a way as the merchant to his desk, or the lawyer to his brief.

The worthlessness of an indifferent horse, on the other hand, is felt most severely in the bush: this he only can tell, who, in the midst of a journey through the pathless wilds, where a night in the open air is the sole alternative of not reaching the solitary station, has felt his horse by degrees grow weaker and weaker, "while his drooped head sinks gradually low," until at length the exhausted animal stands still under him, and refuses to advance

an inch further, so that at last he has to carry his saddle, bridle, and all the etcæteras, on his shoulders, and trudge on alone, for many a weary mile, to the intended halting-place.

Australian horses have a vicious habit known as "buck-jumping," or as it is more familiarly called, "bucking." This trick, in its aggravated form, is peculiar to the colts bred in the colony and in Van Diemen's Land, and is decidedly the most expeditious way that could be devised for emptying a saddle. An expert "buck-jumper" usually begins when his rider is in some degree off his guard and has not got him tight in hand; then, watching his opportunity, he flings down his head between his forelegs, sets up or "arches" his back, and concentrating all his muscular force, gives a succession of short, quick plunges, all his legs being at times off the ground together. While thus "bucking," he usually describes a circle, squealing and snorting the whole time in a most excited manner, and frequently continuing his jumps, after throwing his rider, until the girths also give way, and the saddle follows its owner. There are not many horsemen, however good riders under other circumstances, who can "sit a buckjumper;" a practised few, by keeping the horse's head well up, and taking a vice-like grasp of the saddle with their knees, can manage to sit it out, if not taken unawares; but no man can escape a fall if the horse once gets his head down—he then has it all his own way, and the longer the rider keeps on, the greater will be the impetus with which he finally meets the ground. This habit, though common, is by no means universal: many colts that show it when first handled, are entirely cured when put to regular work; but an aged horse, who is a confirmed buckjumper, is never to be depended on, and if he finds a good opportunity of disposing of his rider, is as likely to do so at the end as at the commencement of his day's work.

No satisfactory reason has been given for the prevalence of this habit, though the probability seems to be that it is caused in a great many instances by the hasty, insufficient mode of breaking horses, pursued in most parts of the colony. If a stockowner has some colts fit for handling, he engages a horse-breaker, who contracts to break them all at so much per head, and whose interest it is to finish his work quickly; and so, as the bush phrase goes, he "roughs them off" as speedily as possible, and pursues

the same hasty treatment towards all, without making any allowance for variety of disposition and temper. Many of these men have no other qualifications for their trade than a firm seat in the saddle, and the power, as it is called, of "sitting a buck-jumper;" patience and perseverance, which are indispensable to a steady horse-breaker, are qualities not expeditious enough for New South Wales. Accordingly young horses are very severely treated, and sometimes fairly "beaten into shape," whip and spur being used indiscriminately as the only means of correction. The consequence is, that many a colt whose temper might otherwise have been good, comes out of the breaker's hands either full of vice, or brokenspirited and worthless.

The way in which a half-wild colt is first caught resembles the rest of his treatment. The whole herd having been driven into the stock-yard, he is enclosed, together with a few others, in one of the smaller divisions; three or four men then go into them, the most expert of whom, usually the head stock-keeper, advances towards the horses, having in his hand a pole, about ten feet in length, from the end of which hangs the noose of a strong rope, made of platted thongs of hide, which, watching his opportunity as the horses rush past him, he drops gently round the animal's neck. This is the critical moment: the colt, frantic with terror, if not checked immediately, would dash himself against the fence, or be crippled in attempts to jump over; and if stopped too suddenly, is liable to be choked, or otherwise injured by the jerk. On the instant, therefore, that the noose is "placed," the rope is seized by all hands, who stop the animal's career as gradually as possible, by giving him plenty of line when he rears, and so threatens to injure himself by falling back, and resuming a steady pull when he attempts to break away by force; in short, playing him much as an angler does a trout, until at length he is dragged, half throttled, into the middle of the yard, where he stands, the picture of mingled rage and fear, squealing and furiously beating the air with his forelegs, while, as the pressure of the rope increases, his tongue hangs out of his mouth, and his eyes are swollen in their sockets. The next step is to get the halter upon his head; this, if practicable, is done as he stands, in which case the catching-rope is still kept tight, while the halter is gently "insinuated" on by means of a short

forked stick, and sometimes by the hand, the man on whom this part of the work devolves taking care to elude a blow from the colt's forefeet, with which he strikes very quickly. But if the animal falls from exhaustion, which usually happens, the noose is immediately slackened, and he is kept down upon his side by main strength, one man pressing his head, another clinging to the uppermost foreleg, the power of which is greatly lessened by its being bent, while a third confines the hind legs in a shorter rope; the halter is then put on and fastened; and, finally, the catching-rope is taken off as he lies upon the ground. It is some time, however, before he recovers his fright; and for a long while after being allowed to rise, he looks, to use the colonial phrase, "as if he couldn't believe it:" and, indeed, the whole affair is anything but moderate exercise to all parties concerned. Next day, when the colt's excitement has had time to subside, his breaking commences; and it frequently happens that the saddle is fairly put on his back in the course of three days from the time when he was first roped.

I have often wondered that the lasso has never yet found its way into the interior of Australia, as the use of it would soon be acquired by men who are so skilful in everything connected with the management of stock. The present method, of catching animals with a rope placed on the end of a pole, is less dexterous, and attended with more danger, inasmuch as it cannot be practised without coming into very close contact with the animal destined to be caught.

Horse-hunting is glorious sport, the best perhaps that Australia can afford. The animal you are on, accustomed to his work, is doubly eager when in chase of his own species, and strains every nerve in the pursuit; while before you a large "body" of horses, "the wild, the free," going at a racing pace, up hill and down dale, with their long matted manes and tails streaming in the wind, form a very animated sight; and the "quadrupedans pedom sonitus," which makes the music of the chase, is peculiarly exhilarating.

The degree of excitement and trouble depends very much upon the habits of the herd pursued. Those which have been kept under constant control are driven in with ease; at starting, they take the right direction, and all that is to be done is to follow

them at a steady gallop, within a moderate distance, always taking care to be well up with them as they draw near the enclosures, to prevent their running past the entrance or breaking away, a trick which, like the half-wild cattle, they are apt to acquire. On the other hand, those that have been neglected soon become very refractory, urged by the natural propensity which all animals have, when running at large, as in Australia, to relapse into the wild state: and they frequently give infinite trouble to their owners, by doing their best to avoid the right route to the enclosures, which, however, they well know, and submit to enter only on sheer compulsion; and this cannot be effected except by what, in colonial phrase, is denominated "solid galloping."

Some herds of horses have become, like numbers of the wild cattle, wholly irreclaimable; and having long defeated all attempts to drive them into the enclosures, are useless to their owner, to whom they are a tantalizing sort of property, visible, yet beyond his reach.

A friend of mine once purchased, on speculation, some of these wild horses, tempted probably by their low price, and by the hope that, as he had great experience in these matters, he might accomplish more than his forerunners; having, however, previously secured himself from loss by stipulating that the horses were to be delivered to him by their owner at the distance of fifteen miles from his station: for the great difficulty with the wild stock consists in driving them off their own pasture grounds in the first instance; when removed elsewhere, they invariably become less refractory.

The first party that went out in pursuit were five horsemen, all tried men, and well mounted for the occasion. After a long search, they happened to fall in with a small group of the same number, with which, in sporting phraseology, they immediately "went away." For a time they succeeded in keeping them together, which is a great point; but all attempts to get them into the enclosure proved, as before, abortive, for they would go no way but their own; and, finally, when hard pressed, would separate, or "split off," each in his own direction. The horsemen had no alternative but to do the same, and each singling out his quarry, continued the chase alone. The finale was the same as it had constantly been before, nearly all

parties, both pursuers and pursued, being run to a stand-still. One or two of the colts were brought in to the enclosures, so thoroughly exhausted that the horsemen could throw their stock-whips around their necks, and fairly lead them home, incapable of resistance. After many days' continued exertion, the party succeeded in getting a few together in the enclosures; but when they were again let out to be driven to the place of delivery, they all broke away in different directions, in spite of the efforts of seven or eight horsemen, and notwithstanding that they had been kept without food or water for some time previously; so that the purchaser, who in the early stage of the pursuit had dislocated his shoulder against a gum-tree, was forced to abandon his speculation.

The greater part of these bad habits arise in the first instance from neglect; and it is always very imprudent to allow horses to acquire the habit of rambling far from head-quarters, for, besides the wildness which it fosters, the severe gallops to which they will be subjected over all sorts of country are very injurious to them, especially to the young stock, many of whom are thereby crippled before they are old enough for breaking. Australian horses are chiefly descended from English blood, with a few Arabs. Their quality varies so much in different parts of the colony, that a fair estimate of them cannot be formed except by one who has visited many of the large breeding districts. In some of these coach and cart-horses are principally reared; in others, hacks and well-bred horses; and in not a few the stock-owners, either from carelessness or want of judgment, pay no attention to quality, so long as they can increase their numbers; for this reason there are many herds in the interior of a very worthless description, being neither fit for saddle nor harness. But in other districts, where more attention has been paid to breeding, many excellent animals are produced—better, indeed, than might be expected, when it is remembered that no horses of first-rate form have as yet been imported to the colony, and that English horses certainly deteriorate in Australia, inasmuch as the young stock seldom equal their sires either in shape or size. This is chiefly owing to the nature of the climate, which, from the excessively rapid growth it promotes in all kinds of animals, causes them to shoot up too hastily, and, as a natural conse-

quence, does not bring them ultimately to the same perfection to which they attain in England, where the form is more gradually developed.

One striking defect in the Australian-bred horses is the narrowness of their "build;" there is usually a want of expansion of the ribs and of the frame generally. Saddles intended for colonial use must be made narrower in the tree than those used in England, which would not be serviceable in New South Wales. On the other hand, they have many excellent qualities; activity and hardiness enabling them to sustain a great deal of work upon little food; journeys of many hundred miles in the interior, and all the severe work of the stock-stations, being performed by horses who neither in winter nor summer get more solid sustenance than the natural grass of the country. Their hoofs are remarkably sound and good, rendering the loss of a shoe a matter of little consequence.

But it must be owned that horses in New South Wales are, generally speaking, very harshly and injudiciously treated. In the interior, colts are usually broken and put to hard work at the age of two years, long before their strength is equal to it. Many suffer from this unfair treatment; and those that do not cannot long bear up against the very severe work to which they are afterwards unavoidably subjected, from the nature of the pursuits of the country; the consequence of which is that the majority are broken down before they have passed their prime; and it is a rarity in New South Wales to meet with a sound horse after the age of eight or nine years: one that has long been used for the saddle in the interior, and remains sound, must indeed be a prodigy of hardiness.

Like the human race, horses are subject to very few disorders in Australia; that most fatal one, the glanders, being as yet unknown. Young stock are frequently attacked by inflammation of the throat, commonly called "the strangles," when under the age of eighteen months; but they suffer less from it than animals kept on artificial food, and usually recover without the assistance of man.

The best shaped horse of its kind to be met with in Australia is the light cart-horse, of which some very good specimens are bred, particularly on the beautiful farms in the vicinity of Windsor,

on the river Hawkesbury. The lighter sort is preferred, as being best adapted to a warm climate, where excessive size is less desirable than moderate bulk with more activity.

For long journeys and general purposes, the most useful sort of hack that a resident in the interior can possess, is a tolerably well-bred animal, combining activity and strength with compactness of form, or what is aptly described as a "large horse in a small compass."

To the breeder the most valuable animal is one suited to the Calcutta market. The East India Company have lately purchased numbers of Australian horses for the use of their cavalry; and for this and other purposes the better sort of animal selected from New South Wales has been much approved. One advantage which these horses possess is that, having been bred in a warm climate, they are less liable to be enervated by the excessive heat of India than those imported from colder latitudes.

Whatever be the description of animal that the breeder may prefer, only good ones of their kind hold out any prospect of remuneration; those of inferior quality are now hardly worth rearing, as the supply of all sorts of stock has long exceeded the colonial demand; and as the surplus of the horses cannot, like that of the sheep and cattle, be converted into an article of export by means of boiling down, there is little prospect but of their further depreciation. There is no property on a stock establishment so thoroughly valueless as a breed of ill-shaped and weedy, or, as they are styled in the colony, "three-cornered" horses. On the other hand, he who produces good animals, though at a greater expense, has a double chance of success; he will always find them more saleable in Sydney than inferior ones at half the price; and when the colonial market is unfavourable, their excellence will enable him to ship them to India with advantage.

CHAPTER VIII.

Economy of a Station—An “Up-Country” Store—Mode of Transacting Business—Agriculture in the Bush—Diet—Receipt for “a Damper”—Killing a Bullock—Boundary Questions—A Court of Enquiry—Sunday in the Far Districts.

EVERY proprietor of a large establishment in the interior of the country endeavours so to regulate the arrival of his “supplies” from Sydney, that he may never be wholly at a loss for any necessary article. This is a great point in the internal economy of a station ; for when, by the detention of his teams upon the road, or any unexpected consumption of food, the supplies will not last out during the time that has been calculated, the proprietor pays the disagreeable penalty of being obliged to procure the needful article at some public store in the neighbourhood, to which he goes a most unwilling customer, expecting nothing else than to pay double the ordinary prices, and, in truth, but seldom returning disappointed in this expectation.

The exterior of a bush or “up-country” store in Australia is usually similar to that of an ordinary slab building, except that it is somewhat longer, and of stronger construction. A glance at the inside shows a rude counter, behind which are several shelves, running round the whole length of the building, on which, as well as in all corners from the roof to the ground, is collected a mixture of everything that the pursuits of the country, or tastes of its motley population, render saleable. Slop clothing for the men, Manilla and cabbage-tree hats, gown print and perfumery for women, coarse silk handkerchiefs, for which there is a great demand, as they are much used for stock whiplashes, saddlery of every description, horseshoes and shoeing utensils, sheep-shears and butchers’ knives, Epsom salts and castor oil, are piled up in motley array above the heavier articles, consisting of chests of tea, bags of sugar and salt, and kegs of Virginian and colonial tobacco. The stock, in short, appears

to have been formed by a contribution of all the shopkeepers in Sydney, and there is hardly anything which the owner of a bush store does not keep, or which he considers "out of his line." His trade is frequently a flourishing one, though the cause of its being so is somewhat remarkable, as he may be said to thrive chiefly through the mistakes of his neighbours, for fixed prices are unknown in the bush; and as his chief advantage lies in his possessing an article when no one else in the vicinity is supplied with it, it may be easily understood that on such occasions he sells pretty much on his own terms.

Very little money, however, passes through the storekeeper's hands, for one may reside in the bush for months together without catching a glimpse of the current coin, the "order" system, which has long been adopted in the interior of the colony, being found desirable as a substitute for payment in cash. It is usual for proprietors of stations "up the country" to keep an account current with a Sydney merchant or agent, from whom they also purchase their annual supplies, and, when discharging any debt in the interior, they simply draw an "order" upon him for the amount; their produce is likewise intrusted to his charge, and he either sells it in Sydney, purchases it himself from the settler, or ships it to England, as may be most advisable from the state of the market. A storekeeper's cash-box, therefore, seldom contains anything more than a number of these "orders," commencing with "Please to pay," and addressed to various mercantile houses in the capital. Every now and then he remits a number of them to his agent in Sydney, who collects them, and credits him with the amount. In the interior they pass current throughout the districts where the signatures are known, and thus often remain in circulation for a considerable time.

Were a practical modern agriculturist suddenly transplanted from the mother country to a grazing station some three hundred miles in the interior of New South Wales, just at the time when the paddocks are being prepared for wheat, it would be amusing to see his astonishment at a system, if such it can be called, so utterly at variance with anything he had previously witnessed in farming. Manure is here never used, and a rotation of crops seldom heard of; in fact, a stock-owner who thought about

either would be set down by his neighbours as "cranky." Matters are managed pretty much in the following way:—As many acres of land as are considered sufficient to ensure a supply of wheat in the event of partial failure (for which allowances, owing to the prevalence of drought, should always be made), having been enclosed with a strong three-rail fence, the soil is turned up once with the plough, after which the sower "lays on" the seed, frequently with as little care as if, to use a colonial simile, he were feeding his poultry: the harrow is then drawn once over the whole, and Nature is left to do the rest. This is certainly trusting her a great way; but in spite of this hasty agriculture, very tolerable crops are frequently obtained, far better, it must be confessed, than is merited by the labour bestowed upon them.

But this is not all, for in the far districts it is a common practice, after once ploughing a field, or, as it is always called, a paddock, to trust during the next, and sometimes even the two following years, to what is known as a "self-sown" crop, in which case nothing whatever is done to the land from one season to another: it is taken for granted that sufficient grain for seed has been spilt during the previous harvest, partly from what has shelled out of the ear, and partly from careless reaping, and that each portion of ground has received a little of it, and on the faith of this no further trouble is taken about the matter. Some of these self-sown crops, though seldom yielding as much in quantity as when the land has been ploughed, are still very good; and it is remarkable that the grain thus produced, besides being usually the finest, is never attacked by smut; it seems to acquire a hardiness by its exposure during the winter months, which protects it against this otherwise prevalent evil.

The fact is, that as the chief source of wealth to the colony springs from pastoral pursuits, the stockowner is seldom a good agriculturist; he takes pains to acquire knowledge in the quality of wool, and prides himself not a little upon his judgment in horses and horned cattle, and in the breeding of live stock generally, but his crops are a secondary consideration. The large grazing districts are situated so far inland that there is no market for any surplus wheat, owing to the impossibility of conveying it to the capital upon remunerating terms, so he only cultivates

as much land as he thinks will supply his own establishment; and, indeed, if there should be a prospect of flour being procurable elsewhere at a low price, he does not cultivate at all, his sole consideration being how he may feed, in the most economical manner, the number of men which he is obliged to employ in the care of the articles on which he does actually depend—the produce of his flocks and herds. In the far districts, therefore, the land is cropped year after year successively, until the soil either becomes worn out or choked up with weeds, upon which the fence is pulled down and removed to a fresh spot, a process which, where land is of so little value, requires less time and labour than would be occupied in cleaning and manuring the old ground.

Wheat is converted into flour by means of steel mills, turned by the hand, at least one of which is kept upon every station, and each of the working men has to grind his own weekly allowance of grain.

Men who are hired by the year in the bush, whether as shepherds, stock-keepers, or agricultural labourers, never engage to find their own provisions; they are always supplied by the owner of the station on which they are employed, at a rate previously agreed upon. The usual weekly allowance for a single man is 4 ounces of tea, 2 lbs. of sugar, 4 ounces of tobacco, 1 peck of wheat, and 10 or 12 lbs. of beef; anything that he may require beyond this must be paid for, but this is usually ample. Married men generally have a double allowance, and those who have large families, and to whom a liberal supply of food is a primary consideration, are in the habit of agreeing to take less wages, the difference being made up to them by their receiving an additional quantity of rations.

A loaf of bread is an article seldom seen in the abodes of the working classes in the interior of New South Wales; the proprietor's table is usually the only place on which it is found. In every other part of the establishment a sort of cake, peculiar to the country, and known by the discouraging appellation of "damper," is used as a substitute. I am inclined to think this is an acquired taste, for I remember the first which I ate seemed very unpalatable; those, however, who wish to try for themselves may do so from the following genuine receipt:—Take

eight or ten pounds of second flour, and having placed them upon a strong table, mix with warm water, beginning from the centre of the heap, and knead until both arms ache thoroughly, and until the whole mass has acquired the consistency of tolerably stiff clay; then flatten it out to a thickness of about an inch and a half, rub each side with flour, and prick it all over with a fork. Next, having removed the upper logs from a large wood fire, rake away the ashes on either side, so as to leave a gap in the middle sufficient for the admission of the damper: then cover it over again with the hot ashes, and turn it once during the process of baking. Lastly, brush off the adhering ashes with a cloth, and let it stand on its edge until it is quite cold.

At best it is very inferior to bread, and I presume that its prevalence has arisen from its being used of necessity in the long journeys and overland trips through the country, where it would be impossible to make bread, and hence, partly through idleness, and partly through the force of habit, it has maintained its ground on other occasions, and has thus become the staff of life throughout the interior.

The consumption of animal food in the bush is very large, beef being most generally eaten. When a working man hires upon a stock establishment for so many pounds of meat weekly, he usually expects to receive beef; and on stations where a great many hands are employed, a considerable number of cattle are slaughtered in the course of the year.

As soon as the previous supply begins to be exhausted, the stockkeeper is dispatched to the cattle station to hunt a fat bullock into the enclosures, for which purpose he starts early in the morning, so that the animal, who, when first brought into the yard, is usually in a very hot and excited state, owing to hard driving, may have some time to cool before evening.

About an hour before sundown the stockkeeper brings word that it is time to kill the bullock. In this matter the owner's share of the work is to shoot him, for which purpose, as soon as everything is reported ready, he loads his piece, and proceeds to the enclosure.

When the marksman is skilful, and the animal tolerably quiet, all goes on smoothly enough; but when, as sometimes

happens, the reverse is the case, the result is very different, and a scene something like the following takes place.

The bullock, which has been left quietly standing in the enclosure since the early part of the day, again becomes excited upon the approach of the men, who, with their long knives, pails of water, and other requisites for his final conversion into beef, gather around the yard, awaiting the moment when he falls by the hand of "the master." But just as the latter is on the point of drawing the trigger, the animal, who has been narrowly watching his movements, lowers his head, and makes a mad charge at him, until he comes into violent concussion with the fence, while the ball whistles harmlessly over its intended victim. The bullock then turning tail, runs desperately round his prison, in search of a weak point; and having satisfied himself that none such is to be found, stands out again in the middle, and faces his danger, but with a tremulous motion of the head, which renders the next shot very much like a flying one, and causes considerable delay.

"Go over to him, sir," suggests one of the bystanders, "you'll get a better chance from the inside; he's 'quite quiet,' I've known him since he was a calf."

This bit of advice, however, the settler declines, and resting his gun upon the fence, again takes aim at the fatal spot, a little above the curl on the forehead. This time the ball takes effect, so much so that the bullock falls headlong down, and a man runs in to administer a few additional blows to make assurance doubly sure.

But he is quite premature, for the poor animal, who has been only stunned, comes to himself, and regaining his legs with the rapidity of thought, and seeing one of his tormentors within the precincts of his prison, makes after him with such good will, that he is barely saved by a precipitate scramble over the fence, to the great amusement of his companions.

It is now no easy matter to get anything like a fair shot at the victim of unskilfulness, who is tearing round the enclosures as hard as he can, and the matter must often be brought to a conclusion by catching him with a rope, in the usual way, and putting an end to his sufferings with an axe.

When however this painful scene is over, and the animal is

at last killed, the rest of the work is soon despatched; the carcass, having been skinned and dressed, is pulled up to the "gallows" by means of a windlass, and left to cool during the night. At daybreak it is taken down, salted, and packed away in casks, before the sun has appeared to injure the meat, or the blow-flies have had time to learn anything about the matter.

In the large grazing districts, where the boundaries of the land, over which each stockowner exercises his right of pasture, are not clearly defined by means of fences or hedges, as in more civilized countries, disputes are naturally of frequent occurrence. When a station changes hands, it is usual for the purchaser to ride round the outside of it, accompanied by the neighbouring settlers, so that the limits may be mutually agreed upon. But in spite of every precaution misunderstandings will arise; in process of time some hill or gully, which had originally constituted the landmark, becomes forgotten, or mistaken for another; and the result is, that the right of pasture is claimed by both parties. Remonstrances succeed each other, but in vain; each claimant is resolved to trust to his own memory rather than to that of his neighbour. Matters remain in this unsatisfactory state for a time, until some fine morning, one of the disputants, 'seeing a large flock of sheep, not his own, upon the contested ground, loses all patience, and starts off, on the very first horse he can catch, to the commissioner of crown lands for the district; and by him, after he has told the usual story about encroachment, damage done to his run, representing himself as the sole legitimate owner of the contested spot, and a most ill-used individual, he is informed that his neighbour, whose forbearance also appears to have been exhausted much about the same time, has been to the commissioner upon the very day before, and has lodged, *mutatis mutandis*, the same complaint. Things having come to this pass, the decision is left wholly to the commissioner, who, seeing no prospect of an amicable arrangement, appoints a day for his requested visit to the scene of controversy, usually within a month or so from the period of the appeal to his judgment; during which the disputed pasture is occupied by both parties, and consequently soon becomes as bare, and nearly as well polished, as a mahogany table.

The court of inquiry is usually held at the head station of one

of the claimants, and thither the commissioner arrives on the day appointed, where he meets both the proprietors, each with a host of witnesses. The first occupant, or he who purchased his right of pasture from the first occupant, is the lawful owner, and the point at issue consequently is the fact of prior occupation.

On the witnesses being called, first comes the shepherd of the plaintiff A., who affirms that he has been several years in his master's employ, and has fed his flock upon the disputed land ever since he can remember.

Next appears the stockkeeper of B., who declares on the other hand that his master's cattle occupied the place before any sheep were brought into the neighbourhood, and offers, in corroboration of his testimony, to point out the marks of their old "rendezvous."

But A. also produces his stockman, who states his conviction that the said rendezvous was not made by B.'s cattle at all, but by a herd belonging to a former owner of his master's station.

B. again calls up a witness of longer standing in that part of the country, and the scale of testimony is once more evenly balanced; and thus each party goes back a step beyond the other, and the subject of contention, like a Welsh pedigree, bids fair to be lost in the clouds, while the unhappy commissioner, amidst such conflicting evidence, is gradually taking leave of his wits. In addition to the usual causes of his perplexity, he loses much time from the difficulty in arriving at the real names of some of the attesting parties, for, in the bush of Australia, *aliases* are frequently as prevalent among the labouring classes as in the English collieries. Some of these are ludicrous enough: a neighbour of ours had a stockman who often used to be sent to our assistance at "gathering" times, and was only known, probably from his rough-riding feats, by the title of "Go by 'em;" and I remember that on another occasion, when it was necessary to discover the real name of a man in our district, for the purpose of taking out a warrant against him, for having aided and abetted a party of bush-rangers then in the vicinity, we could get no further, for some time, than the sobriquet of "Terrible Billy."

However, to return to our trial. A. now brings forth his reserve, a man who, by his own account, is of so long standing in the neighbourhood as to have been what is called in the

colony a "first fleeter." He declares that he has been originally in the service of the actual explorer and earliest occupant of the run, part of which is now in dispute, from whom it gradually changed hands, until it fell into those of its present owner. Now, as this man is the oldest of the party, and can therefore claim the longest memory, and as, moreover, he takes care to interlard his testimony with remarks upon the "first sight of the district," wild blacks, and flocks of kangaroos in quiet possession of the plains, all the other witnesses are put to silence, and listen in admiration to their more enterprising companion.

The matter now seems brought to a conclusion, and A. and his party are already congratulating themselves on the result; but just as the commissioner is on the point of deciding the contest in their favour, a sudden idea crosses his mind: he remembers that this primæval settler, though acknowledged to have been the first occupant, omitted, on one occasion, to pay his annual assessment for stock, which has not been subsequently made good; this completely alters the state of affairs; A.'s claim, arising from his prior occupancy, is lost, and his opponent, whose predecessors have been more punctual in their payments to the crown, is installed in possession of the disputed pasture.

On a large sheep establishment the busiest day in the week is Saturday, when the supplies, consisting of tea, sugar, tobacco, wheat, and beef, are weighed out, and sent away in all directions, on carts and drays, to the various sheep-stations.

Sunday is duly observed, even in the bush. It brings with it a cessation of labour, but leisure to some brings listlessness, and to others thought, and the alien's thoughts must often be sad. With what fond regrets, at such a time, does the recollection of home rush upon the mind! The sound of the village bells seems almost to ring in the ear, as fancy recalls the church that "points with taper spire to heaven," and the once familiar faces flocking under the well-known porch. Perhaps, too, something of self-reproach mingles with the settler's dream, as his thoughts wander back to the stately towers and solemn groves of our seats of learning; and he blames the blindness of his credulity, when he left the studies which he now feels were so much more congenial to his tastes—when he left them "non hoc pollicitus suis," and feels conscious that he has facul-

ties which might be better and more usefully employed than in the occupations of the life which he has chosen. But he looks round, and everything that meets his eye reminds him that the die is cast, and repentance out of place.

Most of all does it bring weariness to his spirit to feel himself deprived of the best helps to devotion, and to be cut off from all Christian communion. Perhaps there is not a church within fifty, or even a hundred miles; and he cannot help contrasting his present desolation with the punctual observances of his early life, the veneration for which, once felt, is seldom effaced from the heart.

The philosopher may boast that he can pray anywhere, and the Christian will try to do so; but even with the wisest and best religious feeling is too apt to decline when its outward forms are withdrawn from the sight.

Blame not the toiling and overworked colonist. Let him who is inclined to censure, rather learn the value of those helps of which he has never felt the want; and be stimulated to extend to others on every possible occasion, and by all possible means, those blessings which he himself has always enjoyed.

CHAPTER IX.

An Invitation—Expedition in Pursuit of Stray Cattle—Amos the Native—
A day in the Gullies—Australian Night Scene—Tracking a Wild Herd
—The Chase and Return.

BEYOND the undulating plains which formed our district, lay a vast expanse of broken country, consisting of dry creeks, gullies, wooded hills, and grassy flats, jumbled confusedly together, so as to produce the most remarkable scenery, and fit for nothing but to afford a secure retreat for hundreds of wild cattle, of which mention has been previously made as being wholly irreclaimable, and perfectly distinct in their habits from the half-wild herds. In these almost inaccessible regions they have long bred, and never voluntarily venture out on the open ground. There they remain unmolested, except when any of the branded or domesticated cattle, having strayed from the level country and joined them in their haunts, attract thither the settler and his men in their pursuit; for, if they are not speedily sought and reclaimed, they soon become as intractable as the rest, and eventually past all recovery. An occurrence of this sort, which usually takes place soon after the winter, the time when cattle are most apt to stray, would occasion a note something like the following:—

DEAR ———,

Some of our cattle have been seen among the wild ones in the gullies at the back of our station, and I am going to take a turn at them to-morrow. They have been missed several months, and it is high time that they were taught the way out again. Will you join us? I dare say there are some of your own astray too. Come over in the evening, and bring a stock-keeper with you. We can then arrange plans with "Amos," who will meet us here, and make one of the party.

In a case of this sort it is not neighbourly to refuse assistance;

so, on the occasion in question, as soon as we could catch our horses, we jogged down in the afternoon to answer the invitation in person.

Our arrangements were soon completed. It was decided that the most judicious, or, as Amos called it, the most "judgematical" plan, was to go into the gullies that very evening, and encamp there during the night, so as to have the whole of the following day for our work. Our party consisted of five horsemen, most of them well qualified for the expedition; and my friend, the author of the note, as he threw open his enclosures at starting, felt confident that we should require the use of them on our return.

But our most powerful ally, our sheet-anchor, was "Amos," a short description of whom, as a man "*sui generis*," will serve to beguile the way, as we ride onward to the gullies. He was a native-born white, and had been a stockowner all his life. His parents had given him a few cows and brood-mares at his birth, and he was now, by dint of time and industry, the owner of many thousands of cattle. But though fully possessed of the means, he had no wish to alter his style of living for the better, or to rest in any way from his hard and laborious employment. He was, in fact, a man who could not be wholly domesticated; his slab hut was all that he required at night, and his home was abroad in the saddle, an article which seldom lasted him more than a year. Sparing of his speech, and possessed of little curiosity upon any extraneous subject, it was his maxim—a most excellent one—"always to mind his own business;" and though he was ever most ready to assist, he never interfered with his neighbours. His whole ambition seemed to be what he was—an oracle upon all subjects connected with his own peculiar occupation, and the most fearless rider in the district, one who, let the animals pursued go where they might, had never yet failed to "head them," or refused to follow them down anything "short of a precipice." Every inch of plain, forest, and gully was known to him for miles round, and for months together he would pursue the same daily routine of life, mounting his horse at an early hour and sallying forth to all parts of his "run;" while his "hut-keeper" had one reply to all inquiries—"his master was out after stock."

An overdose of tea, the usual beverage on these expeditions,

drove sleep from my eyes, and it was midnight before I could follow the example of my companions, who, one after another, had sunk into a state of oblivion around me; but I could not envy them, for I was amply repaid for the want of rest by the wild and unreclaimed beauty of the scene.

We had encamped in a verdant gully, between two prettily wooded hills, skirted by a river, which, like most Australian streams, at times a roaring torrent, was now a series of placid lakes, across which the midsummer moon cast its gentle lane of light. Our horses were grazing on an adjacent flat, and the clink of their "hobble" chains grew fainter and fainter as they receded in the distance. The forest, so oppressively silent by day, now seemed replete with life: bats flitted around us on every side; the opossum and flying-squirrel darted from tree to tree, responding with their sharp cry to the croak of the bull-frog from the river-bank, and the call of the wild-drake as he alighted on the water. Above all, the deep rumbling note or shrill scream of a bull would every now and then be heard in the distance, as if assuring us that our chase on the morrow would not be unsuccessful.

I am no advocate for the advantages of savage life. After some experience, I am satisfied that a certain degree of restraint is most conducive to our improvement and happiness; but there is certainly a powerful charm in this free and wandering state, beneath the sunny skies and clear moonlight nights of Australia, lit up by the beautiful stars of the southern hemisphere; and as I rolled myself in my cloak upon my couch of grass, I felt that I could sympathize with those who are wedded to the wilder and less artificial existence of the settler, and pity the man who could only connect hardship with the idea of "a night in the Bush."

On the following morning we were stirring at dawn, and under weigh at sunrise, so as to have full time for tracking, of which I was informed we might expect two or three hours before we caught sight of the chase; and as it is usual on an expedition of this kind to appoint one to be the leader of the party, we unanimously elected to that office our able, though somewhat eccentric neighbour, "Amos the native."

After about an hour's search, during which we had scarcely ever removed our eyes from the ground, or raised our bodies

from a sloping position, a track was discovered on the side of a hill, but the long, wiry grass made it very indistinct, and we proceeded but slowly for some time, until in a dry creek we stumbled upon several other more "likely" footprints making for the low grounds, and probably for the water, where we expected to meet with cattle; but no such thing. At last a flat in the vicinity of a narrow rill, rising out of some rich dark soil, known in Australia as a "black spring," showed us innumerable footprints, crossing and recrossing each other in every direction. Farther on we came to a spot which had recently been the scene of an encounter, so frequent in the wild state, between two of the bulls; for the earth was torn up, and the grass levelled around it, but how long ago was the question, for the birds were flown.

"They were down here before daybreak this morning," said Amos; "that track's as fresh as paint. The best thing we can do now is to separate, and ride round the spring on every side, until one of us hits it off again."

Wild cattle, I may mention, usually come to water by night, and not during the heat of midday, as is the habit of those herds which are in a more domesticated state.

After a delay of about ten minutes' duration, the track led us away down a gully so narrow, that two horsemen could not ride abreast; so we jogged on in single file, expecting every moment to come upon the chase, with a feeling of subdued excitement that was very invigorating. At length we stopped again.

"Well, here's a pleasure to come," said our foremost man, as he pulled in his horse at the foot of a high range, and looked up dismally at its sides, bristling with rocks, and low, thick bushes, known in Australia as "scrub;" "they're gone straight up here. I thought they'd lead us a dance when we didn't catch them near the water." There was no help for it; we all did our best to make out something like a track beyond the fatal spot, but it would not do, and so up the hill we must needs go, dragging our horses after us.

It was my fate that day to have a horse that "would not lead," but regularly jerked me back two steps for every three that I advanced; this, when one is climbing up a hill so steep that there is much ado to get on at all, is no slight trial to the temper, not

to mention the fatigue; and I remember that while I was thus struggling and "progressing backwards," I was heartily out of conceit with hunting wild cattle.

But I got on somehow; the track, after leading us up and up far beyond our first expectations, again became indistinct on a stony ridge, and we once more came to a stand.

"We are close upon them now," said our leader; "they were here not five minutes ago: one of them was basking *there*," (I looked at the place to which he pointed, but could see no difference between it and the adjacent spot); "and, if they've not heard us and made off the other way, we shall be up with them in the crack of a stockwhip."

He had scarcely said the words, when we heard a deep tramping sound close to us, and caught a momentary glimpse of a number of cattle stealing rapidly away on the other side of the ridge, above which their backs and the tips of their horns alone were visible, and in an instant we were after them, helter-skelter.

Unpractised as I then was—for it was my first attempt at "gully-raking," as it is called—I soon found myself completely thrown out; so, leaving my stock-keeper to do his master's share of the work as well as his own, I contented myself with keeping within a moderate distance of the scene of action, while I took a general view of the chase.

Cattle when pursued invariably make for falling ground, for which their formation peculiarly fits them; so much so, that, although an animal should be nearly exhausted on ascending a hill, yet if he can only just manage to surmount it, the weight of his own body carries him down on the other side as speedily as ever.

Down hill, therefore, went man and beast. At the foot of the range there was a dry creek, in which, at a little distance on the left, the bases of two precipitous hills, nearly meeting each other from opposite quarters, formed a narrow pass; for this, knowing it to be their nearest outlet, the wild cattle, some fifty in number, shaped their course: unluckily it happened to lead in the wrong direction, and the race was, therefore, whether pursuers or pursued would get first to the gap.

The range grew steeper and steeper towards the bottom, and it was very exciting to see the whole party going down it together, rattling the loose stones from under their horses' feet,

plunging into, and as suddenly emerging again, from the patches of "scrub," scrambling over the fallen timber, and lowering their heads with great precision, to avoid being swept from their saddles by the projecting branches that occasionally crossed their way; while the action of the stock-horses, owing to the declivity, was at times more like that of a kangaroo than anything else: somebody, thought I, must surely be damaged before long; but I was quite a stranger to the sort of thing, and had not then learnt, what I was assured of on my return home, that "it was only the way of the country."

It seemed that there was a sort of rivalry between my friend's stock-keeper and our invaluable partisan "Amos," and this was a fair field for their exertions. The open country was too easy for them. To get along fast in broken and falling ground is the criterion of horsemanship; so, from this emulation, the riding was perhaps rather more energetic than usual.

The tide of fortune hitherto seemed evenly balanced; but just as the wild herd neared the creek, a black bull, evidently no stranger to the locality, singled out, and, far ahead of the rest, made straight for the gap. He was a very noble beast, without a brand of any kind upon him, and his eye, full and round as a gazelle's, seemed to flash fire, as he pursued his mad career, dashing the foam from his lips. It was absolutely necessary to stop him at all hazards; for wheresoever one animal leads the way, the rest are sure to follow: but he had already gained a great deal of ground, and was now so near the gap, that his escape seemed inevitable.

One chance remained: a ledge of loose stones, so precipitous, that the bull, excited as he was, had turned aside from it in his course, opened a shorter cut. To this two men pushed their horses abreast, but one alone went down it, the other stopped and looked after him. The next minute a horseman stood in the gap; the black bull was seen making off in a contrary direction, and the report of a stockwhip, reverberating through the hills, warned the cattle that "Amos" (for he it was) had reached the goal before them.

This was the grand event of the day, and our success had, in a great measure, hinged upon it. Thenceforth our work was comparatively easy. The cattle were "steadied" for a minute

upon a hill-side, and as soon as the stragglers, of which we were in pursuit, had been clearly distinguished among them, the whole were hunted or rather guided homewards, for they wanted no driving, being apparently bent upon running as long as their legs would carry them; while our business was to keep them together, and always to be beforehand with them in reaching any creek or gully that branched off from the right direction. Now and then an animal would become exhausted, and, standing at bay, threaten death to any one who approached it; or, being nearly blinded with hard running, would take a line of its own, and refuse to go any other; but with these few exceptions we succeeded in driving the whole herd before us.

“It’s lucky we got them,” said Amos; “there were ‘no flies’* about that black bull.”

In due time we regained the level country, where, having the advantage of good ground, we were enabled to single off our own cattle, and leave the wild ones to recover from their alarm at leisure, and to speed their way back again into their own silent haunts in “the gullies.”

* This expression is very common in Australia, and is apparently borrowed from the American “no snakes.” It denotes admiration or triumph. Anything particularly good is said by the class of men we are here describing to have “no flies” about it.

CHAPTER X.

First Visit from the Aborigines—Portrait of an Australian Savage—Of a “Gin” or Female—Their Natural Character—A “Corrobory”—A “Pas seul”—Mental Powers of the Blacks—Language of Intercourse with the Settlers—Religion—Weapons—The Spear and Woomera—The Boomerang—Its Construction and Peculiarities—The Shield and Club—Duel with the Spear—With the Club—Theft Detected—Departure of the Tribe.

OF the many novelties which meet the traveller's eye in strange countries, but especially in one so peculiar as Australia, there is perhaps none more striking, or to which he looks forward with greater interest, than his first sight of the aborigines; I allude of course to those in the interior, and not to the debased specimens that are to be met with in the streets of Sydney. These can create nothing in the mind of the beholder but repugnance at the state of demoralization into which they have fallen, and pity, mingled with shame, that their intercourse with the white man should have apparently served only to eradicate their natural good qualities, few as they were, and to engraft the vices of the European on their own.

Such is one of the least pleasing scenes of the capital of the antipodes. There is a crowd in the vicinity of a public-house; a black, usually very far advanced in a “state of rum,” is settling his differences with his “gins,” whom their ungallant lord is either “waddying,” *i. e.* belabouring with his club, in which he naturally has it all his own way, or vociferously squabbling with, in which, as naturally, he is sure to be worsted. Without any disparagement to the soft sex of other countries, the most loquacious of them all would bear little comparison with an Australian “gin,” when fairly moved to “yabber,” and the veriest scold from Europe might receive a practical lesson of her inferiority from her sable sisters at the antipodes—“So apt and voluble is their discourse.”

It is only in the inland districts, far apart from these scenes of

dissipation, that the New Hollander can now be seen in his natural state; and we had not long occupied our station before our wishes in this respect were fully gratified, for within a month from the time of our arrival we were not only introduced to the major part of the tribe inhabiting our district, but were additionally favoured by the sight of a "corrobory," or native dance, by night, which we were informed at the time was held in honour of our arrival, but which we discovered, when we knew more about the customs of the aborigines, was always celebrated at the time of the full moon.

The party that first presented itself consisted of two males with their "gins," or women, carrying their children on their backs, or occasionally perched up, higher still, above their shoulders, and accompanied by a countless host of dogs, which were in themselves as unlike any other varieties of the canine species as could be imagined, and evidently disliked the whole system of civilization not less than their owners.

One of the men was very old, and his scanty locks, grizzled upon a coal-black skin, had a particularly disagreeable effect; the other was in his prime, and, as a fair specimen of a New Hollander, his appearance may be described as follows:—His height was about five feet four inches, which was the average of our tribe; the chest was full, the arms and shoulders muscular; the body long in comparison with the legs, which were slight, and appeared more so than they actually were from the unnatural protuberance of the belly: this is a remarkable distinguishing point in all the race. The countenance was such as to be very repulsive at first sight, though much of its harshness wore off on further acquaintance. Each feature, however, was very bad if considered separately: the hair was coarse, matted, and reeking with oil, adding by its great luxuriance to the disproportionate size of the head; the forehead was round, and the brows overhanging; the eyes sunk deep into the head, small, and strongly expressive of cunning; the nose was flat, and very broad at the base; the mouth wide, and additionally disfigured (in our opinion) by the loss of the two front teeth, which after a certain age it seems are "not worn." That their loss is a matter of choice, a black, who had long been on our station in a sort of half-domesticated state, gave us a clear proof, telling us one morning with

a look of importance, that he must go away for a few days, as he had grown up to man's estate, and "it was high time that he should have his teeth knocked out!"

Some of the most startling sights that a traveller sees are produced, after all, by different ideas of the ornamental: how many a fair European, whose smile exposes the only spot on her beauty, might covet the pearly teeth of the Australian savage, which, though in our estimation they are the choicest gift he has received from nature, he yet prizes so lightly as to see a greater charm in the gap created by the absence of the very pair that are most conspicuous and important!

To return to our portrait: the whole of the breast and back, together with the arms from the shoulder nearly to the elbow, were marked in a manner peculiar to the New Hollanders, the flesh being raised in a series of parallel lines, interrupted at intervals, of the thickness of one's forefinger. This operation, which is entirely different from the tattooing of the New Zealander and other savage tribes, is performed at an early age by means of a sharp flint, and is a tedious and painful process, though considered no less a matter of course than the loss of the teeth. The skin which covers these mounds or wavelets of flesh has the glossy appearance of a scar, and the effect of the whole is very disagreeable in the eyes of an European.

The female or "gin" (the pronunciation of the *g* is soft, though perhaps the determined etymologist would choose to derive the word from γύνη) was shorter and thinner, and, to say the truth, even less prepossessing in appearance. Though not much past her prime, her cheeks were sunken, and there was a faded look upon her features and limbs as if she was suffering from premature old age. A piece of fish-bone, smooth and polished, was inserted in the gristle of her nose, projecting about an inch and a half on either side, and removable at will, being apparently a sort of full-dress appendage, not to be worn upon all occasions; and though anything but ornamental, it was at least preferable to the vacuum left by its absence, which rendered the profile most unsightly. Round her neck was an ornament which bore some resemblance to an European necklace; it was made of small pieces of reed, cut into equal lengths, and strung upon a sort of thread fabricated from the bark of trees. Her

cheeks were besmeared with pipeclay, a mark of mourning, and her matted hair was adorned with several feathers from the wings of the white cockatoo. Those of the party that had any covering (for some were perfectly naked) wore cloaks made of the skins of the opossum, about forty of which, stitched together with a strong thread made from the "stringy bark" tree, formed a kind of wrapper reaching nearly to the ground, and fastened at the neck by a crooked piece of bone.

The most interesting objects of the group were the children; viewed at that tender age, ere the wild blood ran strong in their veins, they seemed born for better things than their parents could teach them, and we seldom saw one of them without a wish to reclaim it from the hard and desultory life that was before it, in spite, it must be owned, of all known precedents, which have hitherto fully borne out old Horace's maxim that it is in vain to contend with nature—

"Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret."

In fact there is something in the very constitution of an Australian savage which sets at defiance all attempts at domestication. Unlike a Scotchman, of whom, as Johnson has told us, "much may be made if he be caught young," he has, up to the present time, been proof against the ameliorating effects of early education. He can be reconciled to a temporary residence with the white man, he may laugh with him, smoke with him, and accompany him willingly on his excursions; but his stay can never be considered permanent, for even in this half-civilized state he will not long be contented. Suddenly a reaction takes place, and the settler who, on the previous evening, had left his black protégé comfortably sleeping in an adjacent "gunyio," or camp, with his two sheets of bark above his head, and a sparkling log-fire at his feet, awakes in the morning and finds him gone. The fugitive was perhaps to have accompanied him the very next day on some preconcerted expedition which had been discussed the last thing over night, but in the morning he is gone, whither no one can tell: ere the first signs of life appeared, even among the early risers on a stock-station, he has gathered up his spears, his boomerings, and 'possum cloak, and plunged into the boundless forest, whence he will some day re-

appear as suddenly, again to take a peep at the white man's home, and again to return to the superior attractions of absolute freedom.

On the evening subsequent to their arrival, the aborigines, who had been joined by many others during the course of the day, began to prepare for the celebration of their "corrobory," or general dance. A picturesque flat in the vicinity of the station had been fixed on as the scene of action, whither we repaired at about ten o'clock, anxious for the commencement of our Australian night's entertainments.

Round an enormous log-fire, the flames of which, continually fed by green boughs, crackled and rose to the height of many feet in the air, stood some twenty of the blacks, grasping each other by the hand, and forming a circle, within which there was no admittance.

With the exception of a narrow wrapper round the waist they were all naked, and the whole of their bodies from head to foot were streaked with the same white pigment with which, when in mourning, they besmear their faces only. The "gins" took no part in the dance, but sat on the ground at a short distance, scattered here and there in small groups, drawling out a monotonous sort of chorus, and with their short sticks beating on the ground an accompaniment which, when the whole scene before us and the dusky performers were taken into consideration, might well have been called the devil's tattoo. We stood on a bank slightly raised above the performers, and when the "corrobory" had fairly commenced, the extraordinary gestures and attitudes of the dancers, their coal-black bodies illuminated by the flames, their cries echoing through the forest and increasing with their excitement, produced an effect which exceeded our utmost expectations.

It was impossible, however, that such exertions could last long; and accordingly, while we were already beginning to wonder at their powers of endurance, the scene shifted, the circle of dancers stood still, and a black, advancing towards the fire in front of the others, volunteered a "pas seul."

He commenced by leaning forward, placing his hands upon his knees, and bending them outwardly, while he kept his eyes intently fixed on them, for an Australian savage, when dancing, is always the closest spectator of his own performances—he has

no idea of exhibiting solely for the amusement of his companions. The carriage of the upper part of the body was little regarded ; the step consisted in communicating to the legs, from the thigh downwards, a peculiar quivering movement, as if the lines of white pipeclay, with which they were streaked, were slowly revolving. There was nothing graceful, nor, on the other hand, was there anything licentious in the action ; and the only thing we could say of it was, that it was the most singular figure we had ever seen, and perfectly in keeping with the rest of the ceremony. It was midnight ere the corrobory drew to a close ; and while the flames were gradually dying away, and the shouts of the savage crew were echoing more and more faintly through the woods, we retired from the spectacle, to see it again in our dreams.

Mean as were the intellects of our sable friends, and much as they have been vilified on this point, their company was a constant source of interest, and it seemed to us that their mental capacities, if rightly understood, and judiciously drawn out, were at least better than they have been represented. They are frequently set down as too stupid to be taught, and barely raised above brutes, by those who either take no trouble, or are wanting in tact, to distinguish the good from the evil in their natural disposition. Their idleness is unquestionable, and their dislike to all restraint seems bred in the bone ; but they have at least their happy moments, the "*mollia tempora fandi*," and, when they see good reason to shake off their lethargy, they exhibit powers of mind by no means despicable, and some of their remarks are very much to the purpose.

The stock-keeper was one day taxing a black with having speared some of the cattle under his charge, and as the accused failed to exonerate himself, he was called, in conclusion, a "*cabonn*" (*i. e.* great) rascal. This roused him to a defence of his conduct, and after a hot argument and a good deal of excitement, he proved pretty forcibly that, in the natural course of things, he was not the aggressor, and that his tribe, the first occupiers of the district, had as much right to help themselves to a piece of beef, as the white man, by his intrusion and presence, to drive away the emus and kangaroos, which the black denominated *his* cattle.

On another occasion I observed one of the tribe watching with great attention a stranger, who was holding forth with much volubility upon some current topic. When, in conclusion, he was asked what he thought of the speaker, he answered directly, "I believe no good that one." It seemed that with them, as with us, the emptiest vessels make the greatest sound, and he persisted in his first opinion of one who, in his own phrase, had "too much yabber."

The language used in the interior of the country between the Europeans and aborigines is a most ridiculous jargon, being a mixture of the blacks' own language with English and nonsense. It is not easy to account for the invention of these absurdities, as the real word seems always simpler than its substitute. Accident and the accumulation of endless blunders seem to have composed them, and many years' use of them could never diminish in our ears the extent of their absurdity.

Thus, in talking to a black, a dray, cart, or vehicle of any sort, is expressed by a "wheelbarrow;" to see, or distinguish, is to "make a light;" anything white is "like a flour-bag;" to come, or appear, is to "jump up;" to be, or exist, is to "sit down;" a town is designated a "big smoke;" a quantity, or a number of anything that happens at the time to be more than was expected, is called a "thousand;" and so on *ad infinitum*. Epithets, and even long descriptions, are generally preferred to simple terms. The phrase used by our tribe to signify a handsaw was taken from its motion when in action; they never could be persuaded to call it anything but a "yan" (go) "and come back again."

Of these materials an ultra-comic grammar might be formed; and when a conversation is carried on in this dialect, the effect is highly ludicrous. A stockman is in quest of his saddle-horses, and meets some of the blacks, to whom his first question is, "You make a light yarraman belonging to me?" (*i. e.* Have you seen my horses?) To which the answer is, "Bale me make a light, but I believe you burra-burri find 'em; thousand track sit down all about;" (I have not seen them, but I believe you will soon find them; there are tracks in all directions): which "thousand," by the by, subsides upon examination into about a dozen prints of a hoof on the sand, and a few more, of dubious date, upon the grass. This mode of talking is of course used only

by those tribes which occupy the settled districts, where they have gradually laid aside the hostility which the first approach of the white man generally occasions, and have become as familiar with him as it is in their nature to be.

One thing was self-evident in our district, that, inferior as the aborigines were in intellect, they invariably used to learn more of our language than we acquired of theirs. Many of our tribe could speak English tolerably well, whereas it was unusual to meet with an Englishman who had any idea of their language, unmixed with his own, and with the jargon I have just mentioned.

Whether any belief in a Supreme Being existed among our tribe was a source of frequent speculation among us, but all attempts to gratify our curiosity by a sight of their religious ceremonies were baffled. I am unable even to affirm that they have any, or entertain the least notion of a Deity. Funeral rites and some other customs they certainly practised, but always with the strictest secrecy, and with the greatest jealousy of the white man's intrusion. It was remarkable that, while infanticide confessedly prevailed among them, yet the death of an adult was deeply felt. After burial the subject was never mentioned, and the slightest allusion to it would produce a look of mingled horror and remonstrance, which might cause even the most thoughtless inquirer to desist. Few attempts have been made to convert individuals to Christianity, from a generally prevailing opinion that there is little hope of success.

A never-failing source of interest and amusement to us, when any of the tribe were encamped at our station, arose from the exhibition of their weapons, which served to beguile many a summer's evening when the labours of the day had been concluded. They are few in number, consisting of two missiles, the spear and boomerang; the "waddies," or clubs, of which they have a great variety; and the "heeloman," a kind of shield or weapon of defence.

Their mode of throwing the spear is peculiar to themselves; other savage nations hurl it from the hand alone, but to an Australian black it would be useless without the aid of his "woomera," or throwing-stick. This is a narrow slip of wood, about three feet in length, broad at one end, and furnished at the other with a

blunt barb, which fits into a nick at the head of the spear; and the hand of the thrower also grasps at the same time the other end of the woomera, and the spear about three feet from the butt. Upon launching the spear, the woomera is retained in the hand, and thus acts as a powerful lever, usually commanding a range of 90 or 100 yards, which is considerably more than it could be sent in the ordinary manner.

The spears are of two sorts: one perfectly solid, and about seven or eight feet in length; the other, which can be thrown to a greater distance, is made of light reeds, joined together with gum and fibres of the bark of trees, and terminating in a point of very hard and heavy wood.

The most curious missile is the boomerang, which may unquestionably be considered the most extraordinary offensive weapon ever found in the possession of savages. It is a thin curved piece of wood, varying from two to three feet in length, and about two inches broad; one side is slightly rounded, the other is perfectly flat. When thrown, it must be held by that end which brings the flat side on the right hand, or outside; and the convex edge of the weapon must be nearest to the thrower, to whom, therefore, when he is in the act of dismissing it from the hand, the edge alone is visible. It is used in warfare, for killing game, and also for amusement; and the shape consequently varies a little with its intended application: a war boomerang is the largest, and being merely constructed to fly in a straight direction, has less curve than the other kinds, and but little difference between its two sides. This is the most formidable weapon the blacks possess, as well from its power of inflicting a serious wound at a considerable distance, as from its extraordinary evolutions, which render it difficult to be avoided.

The shape of the other two varieties of this weapon is nearly the same. They are shorter, and usually of ruder construction, but far more curious in their action; they are also more serviceable to the black than the spear, whenever he is in pursuit of smaller game, from the ease with which they can be concealed in the folds of his blanket or opossum-cloak, while he steals on his prey.

But it is only when thrown for amusement that the wonders of the boomerang are fully developed. Whenever there was a

camp of blacks near our station, it used to be our great delight to assemble a few of the most promising of its inmates, and offer a prize, some tobacco or flour, to the one who acquitted himself the best with his boomer; thus pitted against each other in friendly strife, they would go to work in earnest, and fairly astonish the white men. Doubtful as it may seem to those who have never witnessed the feat, an Australian black can throw this whimsical weapon so as to cause it to describe a complete circle in the air; or, to give the reader a better idea of what is meant, he would stand in front of a tolerably large house, on the grass plot before the door, and send his boomer completely round the building, from left to right; that is to say, it would, upon leaving his hand, vanish round the right corner, and, re-appearing at the left, eventually fall at his feet. The whole circumference of the circle thus described is frequently not less than 250 yards and upwards, when hurled by a strong arm; but the wonder lies wholly in its encircling properties, and not in the distance to which it may be sent.

When forcibly thrown, its course is very rapid, equalling the speed of an arrow for about 50 yards, until it arrives at the point where it first begins to alter its course; thence it continues its career at about half speed, and so gradually flies with diminishing impetus, until, as usual, it returns to the spot whence it started. Its flight is not unlike that of a bird; and occasionally, when great strength has been exerted, it hovers for a few moments before it falls to the ground, and, continuing its rotatory motion, remains in other respects quite stationary, much in the same way as a humming-top when it goes to sleep on the ground. A deep hurtling sound accompanies its course, during the whole of which it revolves with such rapidity as to appear like a wheel in the air.

By holding it at the opposite extremity, so as to bring the flat side on the left hand, a circle may be described in the other direction, *i. e.* from left to right, for the flat must always be the outer side. But the prettiest evolution it can be made to perform is the following:—It is thrown with a tendency downwards; upon which, after having gone some 20 yards, one point of it tips the ground, three times successively, at intervals of about the same distance, rebounding with a sound like the twang of a

harp-string: meanwhile it still continues its circular course, until, as before, it returns to the thrower. This feat is more difficult to accomplish than that of sending it through the air, and requires all the thrower's skill; there is one precise distance, and no other, at which it should first strike the ground, for, if it does so too forcibly, its progress is wholly arrested; and if, on the other hand, it is not sufficiently depressed, and fails to come in contact with the ground, its course is then completely altered, for, shortly after passing the place where it ought to have rebounded, it begins to rise, and towers up in the air to the height of about 50 feet, whence it falls down, almost perpendicularly.

There is considerable difficulty in acquiring the knack of using this weapon; few Europeans accomplish it, and those who succeed are at best poor imitators of the blacks, who practise it from childhood; and even at that tender age they may be seen disporting themselves around their "gunyios," or camps, with boomerings proportioned to their strength; as the young peons of South America show promise of future dexterity with the lasso, in its earlier use on the pigs and poultry.

We were never tired of witnessing the performances of the blacks; as they warmed with the exercise, and put forth their utmost strength and skill, several of the boomerings would be whizzing around us together; there was endless variety in their evolutions, and in the incomprehensible feats they occasionally performed; thus we used to gaze on them with undiminished interest, as they cut through the clear Australian air, until darkness put an end to the exhibition.

The principle of the boomerang has never yet been satisfactorily explained; I never could understand it, and it has puzzled far wiser heads than mine. What is there in its shape that causes it to describe a circle? The rule of its construction the blacks themselves either cannot, or will not, explain. However, by merely grasping a boomerang in the hand, and poizing it, they can tell at once, without throwing it, whether or not it will fly. I have often shaved some of the wood from one, thinking to improve it thereby, and a black, upon taking hold of it, has at once declared it to be "bale budgery" (no good), which, upon trial, always proved to be the case; the little that I had taken

from it, by destroying the balance, had completely deprived the weapon of its power of motion.

For a long time we used to puzzle over the matter, and once entertained thoughts of submitting it to some senior wrangler at Cambridge; but gradually ceased to cudgel our brains about it any more, on the plea that it must be inexplicable, and that, with the ornithorhynchus, the native cherry, and many other animal and vegetable productions of Australia, it was, and must remain, a paradox.

The heełōman is a sort of shield, made of the toughest wood procurable, about three feet in length, and six inches in breadth at the centre, whence it gradually tapers off to a point at either extremity. The handle is in the middle, and is merely a small aperture, just large enough to admit the hand. It is chiefly used in the duels which frequently occur, both between individuals of hostile, and of the same tribes. For certain misdemeanours, such, for instance, as stealing a "gin," the offending party has to pay the penalty of standing within a moderate distance, thirty yards or so, of the bereaved husband, to whom a certain number of spears or boomerings are allotted, of which the ravisher has to bear the brunt, defended only by his heełoman. Several of these duels took place at different times in our neighbourhood; and on such occasions there would be a numerous muster of the tribe, and a great deal of speculation as to the issue of the contest, which, however, as if the Hottentot Venus herself had turned aside the darts, usually produced more noise than bloodshed.

The most singular duel is one that our tribe used to fight with the club. Everybody is aware of the superior thickness of skull possessed by the descendants of Ham, and it is nowhere put to a severer test than among the aborigines of Australia. The preliminaries having been arranged by the rest of the tribe, the combatants advance towards each other, one bearing his "waddy," the other wholly unarmed. There is no rush at the commencement, and little excitement on either side. He who is first destined to bear the fortune of war quietly puts down his head, and in due time his antagonist's blow comes down upon it "bang." The waddy then changes hands, and the receiver becomes the assailant. In some instances there is a limit assigned to the number of blows, but in others the duel is protracted; in which

case it may be supposed to terminate in the insensibility of one or both of the combatants, though, as with the spear and heelo-man, I seldom heard of a fatal result : but, in either case, fortune can hardly be said to favour the brave, for a stout heart would be of little service to a champion with a brittle head.

The majority of our tribe were very expert thieves, and on this account their first visit to us ended very abruptly. A large tobacco keg in the store was observed to be rapidly losing its contents, by what means we were at a loss to discover, as the building was perfectly secure. To prevent further loss, the keg was ordered to be removed elsewhere ; and it was no sooner shifted out of its position than the secret was revealed. Through the wooden slab which formed part of the wall, and against which it had been placed, was discovered a hole, very small, but sufficiently large to admit an old "gin's" arm, which is the thinnest that could possibly belong to a human being. The hole was not visible from the outside, owing to a heap of firewood having been piled up against it. One of the tribe, who had been admitted inside the store, had noticed the exact situation of the keg containing their chief luxury, and had worked away stealthily from the exterior, carefully replacing the firewood when the hole had been completed, through which he had thus been enabled to act as a purveyor to the wants of his tribe.

An expedition to their encampment was the result of the detection of the theft, and we flattered ourselves that we should at least have the satisfaction of recovering part of the missing property ; but they were gone, having again forestalled us, and did not reappear until many weeks afterwards, when sufficient time had elapsed to allow them to smoke their spoils in peace, and lay the blame, as usual, upon some hostile tribe, whom they represented as being "thousand saucy," and bad enough to steal anything.

CHAPTER XI.

Incidents of Daily Life—Ride to a Sheep-station—Sporting in the Bush—Native Dog Chase—Anecdote of a Tame Specimen—Business mingled with Pleasure—Emu and Kangaroo—Shooting—Angling—The Platypus or Watermole—Snakes—Man bitten—Effects of the Venom—First Sight of a new pastoral District—Picturesque Scene—Remarks upon the Climate of Australia.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of a settler's daily life is occupied in making visits to his sheep-stations, which are situated on every side of him, at a few miles' distance from that which he constitutes his own place of residence. He visits them for the purpose of overlooking his stock in person, and of guarding against negligence on the part of such of his men as may be suspected of yielding to the "*vis inertiae*," or, as the phrase is, of "not doing justice to their flocks."

Everybody rises early in the interior, and the necessity of being in the saddle by sunrise soon becomes no hardship to the settler, who at least enjoys the cool morning air before the sun is up, and gets a famous appetite for breakfast before his return to the head station, even if he should fail in his primary object, which is to catch his shepherd "napping."

Those who are fond of sporting are usually accompanied on these occasions by one or two kangaroo dogs (a sort of large half-bred greyhound, much prized in the colony), for at this early hour the native dog has not yet returned to his daily retreat; and gives an excellent run. He is generally found lurking in long grass or rocky places, watching some cows and calves, or mares with their foals, with a strong design upon the young stock in both cases.

These dogs run very gallantly at starting, with as much speed as a fox, but with less endurance and courage, for, when hard pressed at first, it is not unusual for their running powers to desert them through fear. However, when attacked, they

always die very hard, giving bite for bite in silence to the last. Their speed varies greatly ; some that we killed were overtaken within a quarter of a mile, others would run four or five in capital style, and the last we ever hunted I well remember succeeded in getting clear off, on level ground, though we were mounted on fast horses. It is called dingo and "warragle" by the aborigines, and is an indigenous animal, being neither dog, fox, jackal, nor wolf, to each of which, however, it bears some resemblance, most perhaps to the latter. It usually hunts alone, though three or four are sometimes met with in company, and it preys indiscriminately upon everything it can master, from foals and calves down to the smallest animals and birds. Its prevailing colours are bright yellow and dusky brown, with the tip of the tail white : they are also found of a black colour, mixed in some instances with tan, but this probably arises from admixture with the European species, as an animal of this colour is never seen in any recently discovered district. Its most striking peculiarity is tenacity of life, in which it probably surpasses most other animals. For this reason, and not from any remarkable strength of its own, few dogs can kill one singly. Indeed, so many instances have been known of their recovering under the most improbable circumstances, that a native dog is never considered as left for dead unless some vital part is severed. As a last resource, when neither running nor fighting are of any further service, it has a remarkable trick of "shamming dead," when it may be dragged about by the heels and well belaboured without flinching, lolling its head listlessly down, as if quite lifeless, until a fair opportunity for crawling away presents itself.

A tame specimen, on our station, exhibited a striking instance of their natural cunning. He was chained in a small enclosure, into which a merino ram one day accidentally strayed, and not clearly seeing his way out again, prepared to attack his natural enemy, who being equally willing to do battle, stood out as far as his chain would permit, and awaited the attack. It was strength versus skill. The ram, who boasted a formidable pair of the spiral horns peculiar to his breed, after retreating backwards for some distance in the usual way, rushed forward upon his foe with sufficient impetus to have knocked down an ox, and victory seemed already within his reach. But the native dog

was far too wary to stand the brunt of such a blow; so, just when it seemed inevitable, he crouched suddenly down, and seized his antagonist firmly by the throat as he flew over. Thus he would speedily have despatched him, had we not come to the rescue.

The native dog seldom barks, but howls most dismally, and at night, when they frequently approach the stations, nothing can be conceived more dreary than their cry, which is composed of a series of wailing notes, into the last of which, as if by way of a climax, they throw the very essence of melancholy. To make the matter worse, all the curs about the place invariably join in chorus, and the whole sound, echoing through the lonely woods, produces an effect which might triumph over the equanimity of Zimmerman himself, or any other votary of solitude.

Not the least attractive part of life in the interior of these colonies is the way in which pleasure can be combined with business, without much interfering, as is usually the case elsewhere, with its proper performance. The settler seldom goes out merely for sporting purposes, but they fall in his way as he labours in his vocation. The roving habits of his half-wild horses and horned cattle alone afford occasion for a great variety of hunting, and the chase of the native dog, and sometimes, though less frequently, owing to their shy nature, of the emu and kangaroo, occurs during his visits to his flocks, or his rides across his pasture-grounds.

Vividly do these scenes recur to the mind of those who have known the mingled charms and hardships of "life in the bush." Though I am no keen sportsman, yet I have found the enthusiasm very catching. The early ride to the sheep-station, the counting out from the fold of its fleecy inmates, the quiet return homewards, until the sudden cry of a "warragle" changed the slow amble into a rush as if for very life; the bewilderment of the kangaroo dogs upon the sudden alteration in the aspect of affairs, before they caught sight of its cause, and, when they did, the splendid way in which they would pull down the quarry. And then the death, which might furnish a subject for Landseer, the body lying on the edge of some clear lake, the steeds panting upon the brink, the gaunt hounds plunging into the water to rid themselves of the nausea which is produced by con-

tact with the native dog, and the whole lighted up by the gorgeous morning sun just peering over the distant hills.

Besides the native dog, the kangaroo and the emu, or cassowary of New Holland, are objects of chase. They are animals of a shy and retiring disposition, and the settler's approach is the signal for their departure. They must now be sought in their own distant haunts, and it is very possible to reside in the colony for many years without having seen either. All that the sportsman, when in pursuit of them, requires, is a tolerably fast and sure-footed horse, a pair of good dogs, and a hunting-knife. The speed of both is very great, though neither can be said to run; for the kangaroo bounds, the emu half flies. The former is the fastest, the latter has more power of endurance. At first starting, a young male or female kangaroo, called in the colony "a flyer," can leave both horse and hound far behind. It seems to go with little exertion, but the vast space it can clear at each leap accounts for its swiftness. When it can go no farther, it wheels round, and if there should be a tree or rock at hand, places its back against it, so as to avoid being taken in the rear. A well-trained dog tries to seize it by the back, or side of the neck; if he succeeds, the kangaroo, which is rather a top-heavy animal, falls over, and seldom can rise again. If, however, the hound incautiously makes his attack in front, the kangaroo is apt to get him in his short fore-paws; he then brings up his hind-legs, which are a mass of sinews, and strikes with them like a game cock, aiming to tear his adversary to pieces with his toes or claws, which are very strong and pointed.

The emu has only one means of defence, his kick, which is sufficiently forcible to stun a hound.

The kangaroo is valuable on account of his skin, which makes the most comfortable leather that can be worn in a warm climate; and from the flesh of the emu an oil is extracted which is much prized in "the bush."

The settler who is fond of his gun can always have tolerable shooting. Several sorts of quail, pigeons, snipes, and wildfowl are found in most of the inland districts. The wonga-wonga, a large, dark-blue pigeon, with a white head, is a great delicacy, and the painted quail, which is found among the long grass in "open forest" land, flies not unlike a woodcock. Nor need the

angler forego his favourite diversion in "the bush." Many of the rivers, and especially the lakes, abound with fish, most of which take bait freely, and the paradoxical nature which pervades the animal kingdom in Australia renders a day's angling more than usually interesting—there is no saying what "delicate monster" may not be dragged reluctantly into day at the next bite.

This brings to my recollection our old favourite prodigy, the *ornithorhynchus paradoxus*, called also the platypus, duckbill, and watermole by the colonists, which might be seen, any evening, lying on the top of the water in the rivers and water-holes in our vicinity. It was shot sometimes for the sake of stuffing it and preserving it as a curiosity, though it was very quick at diving or "ducking the flash." Whether it is oviparous or viviparous still remains undecided among naturalists.

Snakes are met with in most parts of the colony. In some species the bite is harmless, in others it produces violent inflammation, and in a few the venom is so subtle as to cause death in a short time. The effect, in many instances, is much exaggerated, as well as the hostility of the reptile. The fact is, that the snake is always too glad to escape when he can, and is often the most frightened of the two parties meeting, but will infallibly attack any one who gets in his way, or cuts off his retreat to his hole.

Though I have heard innumerable stories of fatal results ensuing from the venom of snakes in Australia, many of which were certainly true, yet I never actually witnessed the effects of a bite, except on one occasion. The sufferer was a bullock-driver, who, on returning late one evening from a sheep-station with his team, was bitten in the ankle. On reaching home he came directly to report his accident, and said that he shortly expected great agony; but it was in vain to send for any medical man, as there was not one within twenty-five miles, and before he could possibly arrive the patient would either have recovered, or be beyond all human skill.

The venom first began to operate visibly in about twenty minutes after the bite. There was but little external swelling. A death-like chill came over the sufferer, which was so strong that although he was placed in front of a large fire, and covered

with blankets, the weather being then very sultry, his flesh was as cold as ice, and his teeth chattered in his head: the chill was in his blood. Soon a reaction took place, intense heat succeeded its opposite extreme, and the man ran out into the open air to cool himself, for he had suddenly become as hot as fire. Next came delirium, which after a time gave place to nausea and headache. The patient then slowly began to recover, and before daybreak, was out of danger, though he was so worn and haggard in the morning that it seemed as if the effects of the venom, in the course of a single night, had added five years to his age. It was a painful sight to witness, for we could do nothing to alleviate his sufferings, and looked on in constant expectation of his death.

The most spirit-stirring sight which the sportsman can witness is the first view of a new pastoral district; and to the lover of the picturesque perhaps this is the most beautiful scene that Australia can afford. Little does the resident in the vicinity of the capital, or the hasty traveller, who, as the case may be, lauds or abuses the scenery of Port Jackson, or the Paramatta River, dream of the fair spots that lie far in the interior. Plains and "open forest," untrodden by the foot of the white man, and, as far as the eye can reach, covered with grass so luxuriant that it brushes the horseman in his saddle; flocks of kangaroos quietly grazing, as yet untaught to fear the enemy that is invading their territory; the emu, playfully crossing and recrossing his route; the quail rising at every step; lagoons literally swarming with wildfowl—these are scenes reserved for the eye of the enterprising settler, or the still more enterprising "overlander." *

Then mark the change that follows hard upon discovery. Intelligence of the new country reaches the settled districts, and countless flocks and herds are poured into the land of promise. It is divided into stations, and "improvements" are everywhere erected upon it; disputes arise, and a commissioner is appointed to settle them; bushrangers are "out," and mounted police are sent to hunt them down; the wild blacks, indignant at the cool occupation of their territory, spear the cattle, and the settlers

* An overlander is one who makes long expeditions from one colony to another with stock, either for the purpose of finding new pasture land on which to establish himself, or to take advantage of a favourable market.

retaliate. The governor establishes a "protector of the aborigines," who perhaps has most need of protection himself. To some the new region brings wealth, to others disappointment, while Anglo-Saxon energy at last triumphs over every obstacle. But Nature, as if offended, withdraws half her beauty from the land; the pasture gradually loses its freshness; some of the rivers and lakes run low, others become wholly dry. The wild animals, the former peaceful denizens of the soil, are no more to be found, and the explorer, who has gazed on the district in its first luxuriance, has seen it as it never can be seen again.

The climate of Australia has been so frequently discussed that I should scarcely advert to the subject, did I not wish to protest against the soundness of the claim which is constantly set up for it in the colony, of superiority to that of Great Britain. Indeed, I have heard the climate at the antipodes extolled to such a degree, that I have begun to fear that the colonists would end by flattering themselves that there was no fine weather in any other part of the globe.

The majority of travellers who visit Australia declare its climate to be the best in the world. One of the very best it undoubtedly is: there are probably few countries where there are more fine days out of the 365, none where there is a more anti-consumptive atmosphere, or a purer expanse of sky: infantine diseases are unknown, and man can nowhere expect to enjoy more uninterrupted health. If he loses it, it is usually through his own fault.

If a perfect climate is to be found anywhere it is that of Sydney in the winter, where, for about three months, that is to say, during June, July, and August, it would be impossible for the veriest grumbler to say that the weather was too hot, too cold, too anything, unless he should adopt the complaint of Captain Hall's discontented friends, and call it "too temperate." The sky is without a cloud, the sun warm, without the excessive heat of summer, the air clear as crystal, and of a nature peculiarly buoyant and exhilarating.

But the only true criterion of the excellence of a climate is the growth and perfection of its animal and vegetable productions; and after a long residence in the country, and close attention to the subject, I am bound to say that, judged by this

test, the preference, upon the whole, must be awarded to the climate of Great Britain.

The question is not which is the most agreeable climate; this is a point which depends entirely upon each man's peculiar constitution and taste. The climate of Australia is delightfully dry, but this dryness amounts to a defect. Our English moisture is wanting to produce, as it does in this country, the great luxuriance and variety of scenery and verdure, and to bring the animal and vegetable kingdom to the highest perfection. Where there is scarcely any winter there is not the full enjoyment of summer, and where there is "perpetual spring" there is virtually none.

The climate of our own district, indeed, was one of the best in the colony, more temperate throughout the year than that of Sydney, and far more so than that of the northern settlements. The summers were tolerably cool, and the winters were varied with not a few mornings of frost, and even occasional falls of light snow. But in many parts of the colony the summer's heat is unpleasant and oppressive. The hot wind, which has been frequently described, is felt in the inland districts as well as in Sydney, but it is not, of course, called by the name of a "brick-fielder" anywhere but in the capital, where it acquired the name from the circumstance of its passing over a large brick-field, and thus filling every place with red dust. Wherever it comes, it is destructive to vegetation, prostrating the crops before it, and withering the beautiful gardens in a few hours: it does not, however, permanently affect the vegetable kingdom, nor is it injurious to man. It blows invariably from the interior, and this circumstance has led many to adopt the theory that the hitherto impenetrable centre of Australia is a vast sandy desert, over which this wind passes, and acquires its heat in its course.

The animal and vegetable productions of Australia, though decidedly of an excellent quality, yet rather degenerate from those of the mother country, whence most of them have been imported. Throughout the colony there is a forcing tendency in the climate, which causes the fruits of the soil to ripen too quickly, and hence they are inferior in quality to those of more temperate latitudes. This failing is also apparent to the breeder

of stock, who constantly witnesses this degenerating tendency in his flocks and herds.

The native-born population (I allude, of course, only to the whites), though a remarkably fine race, and, it must be confessed, approaching very closely to their ancestors' heels in personal appearance, yet are not, upon the whole, equal in form to the parent stock. The average height of the Australians is probably more than that of the English, but when they exceed a certain standard they are apt to become loose made and weedy, thereby justifying their appellation of "cornstalks." When of moderate height, they are remarkably well-shaped, broad, muscular, and active. In feature they are more like the English than any other of our descendants; in fact it would be very difficult to distinguish an Australian from an Englishman by his appearance, for the climate of New Holland does not produce in the sons of its soil that dark, foreign look which frequently characterises the Americans and other races originally sprung from British blood, and many of the native Australians retain the light complexion and blue eyes of the Anglo-Saxon race.

The native girls are for the most part tall, straight, and good-looking, their chief defects being want of colour and depth of chest; in these points only inferiority to their ancestors can be observed, though it is remarkable that the men have proportionably a finer development than the other sex.

A striking characteristic of the animal growth of the human race in Australia is the rapidity with which both sexes shoot up at an early stage of their youth. A native white, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, appears destined to attain the utmost perfection of form; but from that age to twenty there is not usually that expansion nor development which the previous growth had promised.

Sufficient time has not yet elapsed since the formation of the colony to admit of a fair calculation being made of the average duration of life among the native-born population; but, as the bloom of their youth soon passes away, and as their climate produces such rapid growth, it may be doubted whether they will prove remarkable for longevity.

CHAPTER XII.

Character of Australian Scenery—Conflicting Statements of Travellers—Trip to Lake Omio—My Companion—A Whimsical Reception—Colonial Idea of a Bad Road—Wild and Forlorn View—A Team in the Mountains—Colonial Drivers—Chapter of Accidents—Descent of “The Gulf”—The Snowy River—Road by its Banks—Wild Oats—Bark Canoe of the Aborigines—A Bush Ferry—The Nine-Mile “Pinch”—Route through the Mountains—Events of the Road—A Herd of Horses in the Mountains—Skill in Woodcraft—The “Freestone” Range—Striking Contrast—First Sight of Omio Plain—Picturesque Spot—Our Host at Omio—Colonial Pets—Native Companion—Kangaroos—White Cockatoos—Parrots—Story of the White Woman carried off by the Wild Blacks—A Cool Visitor—Return Home.

THE general character of Australian scenery, like that of its indigenous productions, is peculiar to itself. In many parts of the interior especially there is something in its wild singularity which defies the description of the traveller and the skill of the artist. Neither the note-book of the one, nor the pencil of the other, can convey it to the imagination; it must be seen to be understood.

Nor is it enough to study the different aspects of its scenery as it appears in the vicinity of the capital or inland townships, and along the sombre forest-girt coasts in the untrodden wilderness, and in the long-settled districts, where avarice has overstocked the pastures, and laid bare many a once blooming spot. It must be studied under every change of season and circumstance; and these vary so much that the traveller who visits the country after a long drought might justly be repelled by the uninviting aspect of a district the exuberant fertility of which, on another occasion, would call forth his warmest admiration. A very short time is sufficient to work these extraordinary changes, and the experienced colonist, who has long witnessed their progress and effects, has no reason to be surprised at the conflicting testimony of travellers on the subject of Australian scenery.

Among the many tours of business and pleasure which vary the routine of a settler's life, one in particular remains stamped on my memory, as having made me acquainted with the most striking and varied scenery which I ever beheld during my stay in the colony.

We had heard a great deal of a fine plain, or rather a series of small plains, and of a lake, which, not being more than a hundred miles distant, might be considered in our neighbourhood, for in Australia, owing to the vast size of the country and the erratic habits of bush life, one soon acquires a very comprehensive idea of space. Travellers who occasionally passed that way gave a glowing description of the beauty, fertility, and the richness of the soil and pasture in this favoured region. It became the lion of our district, and I felt as if I had never stirred from home because I had not seen Lake Omio.

Just at this time a friend and neighbour, who was on the eve of setting out on one of his periodical visits to his out-stations which lay in that direction, invited me to join him. The road, he gave me to understand, was bad, but it was the end of summer, the least busy season of the year, the weather was fine, and our horses had grown fat and lazy. I should not only obtain sight of a place which seemed to please everybody, but I should pass over a great variety of country, and, above all, should learn by experience what a bad road, in the colonial acceptance of the term, actually was.

Besides I liked my companion: E—— was the son of an officer, who had left the army and settled in Australia in the earliest days of the colony, and, having married, had brought up a numerous family, to whom he had given the best education that could be procured in the country of his adoption. He was frank and intelligent, and there was not a little originality in his ideas and remarks, or rather 'conjectures, on the subject of the land of his ancestors, of which he had heard much, and thought more, but which he had never seen. His mind was cultivated, and had not been narrowed by the narrowness of the sphere in which he had lived; our conversation was mutually interesting. He would beguile the way with many an amusing and characteristic anecdote of colonial life, and in turn was never weary of listening to descriptions of the high civilization of merry England,

her shady lanes, her sloping lawns and rich green meadows, and, above all, the wonders of her vast metropolis. I must own, too, that in a country where, as a new comer, I had to receive information from everybody, there might be some little charm in finding one to whom I had information to give. I therefore gladly availed myself of this opportunity, and on the appointed day I joined my companion, bringing with me, according to his pithy advice, a stout heart, a horse of similar "figure," and as little luggage as possible. E——, who was going to "muster" at his out-station, also took with him his stockkeeper, and a black from one of the "naturalized" tribes, who was very useful "after cattle."

For the first twelve or fifteen miles after we had left the open country, and plunged into the vast mass of forest through which our route lay, all went on smoothly enough; the hills were short and by no means precipitous, the woods occasionally opened, and a grassy flat or green "creek" would appear to relieve the eye. As we approached the end of our journey we came to one or two "pinches," which is the colonial term for steep hills: but as yet there was no indication of a very bad road, and I congratulated myself as I thought, "If we meet with no more broken country or thicker 'scrub' than we have passed in our first day's journey, our toils will be amply repaid by a sight of the fair lake Omio."

The first night we "made" an out-station, situated in a small open flat, in the midst of deep forest and thickly-wooded ranges. No sooner had we appeared in sight, than a crowd of dogs, starting up from all quarters, ran barking towards us, awakening the echoes far and wide. This disturbance brought out the proprietor, a small settler of the lower grade, who, by a dexterous use of such missiles as were supplied by sundry bullocks' horns and feet which were lying about the place, speedily constrained the noisy crew to draw off their forces and return towards "the hut," all but one luckless cur, who, having thereby drawn upon himself the indignation of his master, was summarily punished by having all the other dogs set upon him, and being hunted "down the creek." The mixed discourse of our host, as he alternately welcomed his guests, and urged his dogs upon the offender, had a very whimsical effect.

"Hie after him ! hold him ! hold him !—good evening to you ; let me take off your saddles : I 'm sure you must be tired. The best thing you can do with your horse is to—Hold him ! hold him ! hold him !—I 'm afraid I 've but rough fare to offer you, nothing but beef and damper ; but in a new country like this we must all learn to—Hold him there ! hold him ! ho—old him !" &c.

Perhaps I should have mentioned before that a creek, which in most other parts of the world signifies a small inlet or arm of the sea, is very differently understood in Australia, where it generally means a valley, or any open space in the forest, with or without water. The use of the word in the colony is in fact very vague, and might well mislead a stranger. "Which is the way?"—"Down the creek." "Is Mr. so and so at home?"—"No ; he 's just gone *up* the creek." "How shall I find the station?"—"Oh, you can't miss it, it's *in* the creek."

On the second day we had not left the station of our entertainer more than a mile when the road divided into two branches, both leading to the point of our destination. Here my companion stopped to give some information to a stranger who was inquiring their comparative merits. I was all attention, and was not a little alarmed to hear of "Jacob's Point," "The Gulf," the "Snowy River," and, worst of all, the "Nine-mile Pinch."

But perhaps, thought I, they were talking of some other road, or perhaps they think to scare me ; or, probably, knowing that it is my first trip in this direction, they wish to give me a little "colonial experience;" besides, the badness of a bad road is always exaggerated.

Thus reassured, I resumed my journey, and we had travelled on some six miles through the eternal forest, when my companion, who was then slightly in advance, stopped, and, on riding up to him, I found that the scene had suddenly shifted ; the forest had opened, and for the first time there burst on me the full perception of what is called, in Australia, a bad road.

Immediately before us lay—nothing : beneath us, as far as the eye could stretch, appeared a dark mass of ranges, most of them covered with timber of great height, others showing here and there an open glade. These were intersected in all directions by narrow gullies and innumerable dry sandy creeks, forming

a landscape which seemed dislocated and disjointed, as if it once had been, or was intended to be, different from what it then was. Before us was the semblance of a vast chasm, as if the earth had formerly been rent by some frightful convulsion of nature. The position of many of the hills was very remarkable. Perhaps the best idea of the scene would be gathered from my friend E——'s descriptive remark, that "it looked as if it had been taken up in a table-cloth and shot out, hills, gullies, and all together, to find their own position, and to sink into shape by the mere force of gravity." In the lowest depths of the ravine all appeared a winding river, which, from the height on which we were then standing, seemed a narrow brook, though we subsequently found it was broad, deep, and rapid. There was something very striking in the landscape before us; it was grand in the extreme, but it was a wild and melancholy grandeur, such as perhaps few countries but Australia can show, bringing weariness to the soul and oppression to the eye, with a sense of infinite desolation.

"This," said my companion, "is the Gulf."

"A rough place for a stranger," I replied. "Should not we have done better if we had taken the other road?"

"Then our journey would have been much longer, and, besides, we must have gone down 'Jacob's Point.'"

"Well, even that, bad as it sounds, must surely have been better than this."

"Jacob's Point better than this? why, it's half as steep again, with no foothold for man or beast. It's quite a matter of taste, but, in my opinion, nobody that knows the road would go by Jacob's Point as long as there's such a place as 'the Gulf.'"

"Well, but I don't see any track on this side of the river; I suppose we shall have to cross it?"

"Twice," said my companion.

"And the bridge, I imagine, is like the rest of the bridges in the bush, such as the newspapers describe as 'temporary,' or, in plain truth, full of holes."

"Bridge!" said E——, with a look of unmixed astonishment; "I hope you did not expect a bridge; we shall be lucky if we can find a ford, for, now that I take a second glance at the river,

its waters look very muddy, which is a sure sign of its being high, not to say a 'banker.' "

I found my prospects did not improve by inquiry, but I was not yet quite dashed, and determined to find comfort at last.

"Well," said I, "I suppose, when we *do* get to the bottom of 'this Gulf,' and across the river, our troubles, for this day at least, will be at an end?"

"Not quite," said my companion, drily, though with something like a smile lurking about the corners of his mouth.

"Why, what more *can* we have to do? is there a second 'Gulf' to go down?"

"No, there's nothing more to go down; but do you see yonder range on our right?"

"Perfectly; it's the highest for miles round."

"Well, we must get up that by sundown. I told you it was a rough road, and so, to be sure, it is; but, come what may, to-night we must encamp at the top of the Nine-Mile Pinch."

I was by this time quite satisfied, and resolved to ask no more questions about the road to Omio.

It is not only horsemen that travel these distant roads: we noticed the tracks of drays, some of them quite fresh, leading down the mountain-path which lay before, or rather beneath us. It might well puzzle a stranger to understand how they got down, for the road, which, in addition to its great declivity, was filled with stumps of trees and fragments of loose granite rock, shelved off very rapidly towards the precipice, so as to afford little foot-hold for the cattle, and formed, what, in colonial phrase, is called a "side-line."

Occasionally, in the most critical parts of the road, the drays are assisted in their descent by ropes, which are fastened to the trees on the upper side; sometimes a smaller wheel is carried on the dray, which is substituted for the upper one in places of danger, thus bringing the vehicle more upon a level. But in spite of every precaution, and the wonderful skill and energy of the colonial drivers, one dray in three would upset in this almost impenetrable country. Great is the confusion on such occasions: the driver, who is on the lower side of his team, when he sees, after exhausting all his resources, and making such exertions as few besides a British colonist could make, that an upset is un-

avoidable, has barely time to slip on one side, when, with an impetus which causes a woful dispersion of its motley cargo, over goes the dray. Then follow the many minor accidents which, though no joke at the time, might well afford a laugh on some future day,—

“Hæc olim meminisse juvabit.”

Everything gets out of place in an instant: the sugar becomes mixed with the tobacco, and the salt with the tea. Mark that cask, which, as if delighted at its sudden escape, is rolling down hill, in any direction but the right one, at a speed which defies pursuit. What are its contents? and when, in the name of vexation, *will* it stop? Now its pace slackens, now it resumes its career as merrily as ever; that black stump will surely stop it, or, as they say in the colony, “bring it up.” Yes—no—yes. It *does* bring it up, and, in so doing, the hoops, whose fixity of tenure, like that of the waste lands beyond the boundaries of the colony, has for some time been very uncertain, are broken, and the contents, by all that’s unlucky, prove to be—horseshoes, each of which keeps up the game, and is distinctly seen, by the agonized spectators, to take a separate course, some diving into the patches of “scrub” upon the mountain-side, others remaining buried in the long grass, while many more roll on, and on, and on, until they finally rest in the dry bed of the gully that yawns beneath.

But this is a digression. Behold us then once more advancing. There was little fear of a horse “not leading” down the Gulf, not the least difficult part of the descent being to advance oneself and keep back one’s horse at the same time. The consequences of a fall would probably be that the animal would put his foot into his rider’s pocket, or stamp him with the brow of a Red-gauntlet. As we descended, the silence seemed to increase, save when it was broken, in a startling manner, by the loud note, *ha! ha! ha!* of the “laughing jackass” (a bird indigenous to Australia), as he sat upon the branch of some neighbouring gum-tree, seeming to mock our toils, and to claim us as his own kindred for having undertaken the labours of so precipitous a road. Arrived at the foot of the range, we found a vast heap of the blackened trunks of various species of the Eucalyptus, which had been dragged from the top of the “Gulf” behind the

drays which passed that way, in order to retard their progress ; and as they thus lay piled one upon the other, they formed a barrier as strong as the pah, or native fortification, of a New Zealand chief.

We were now close to the river-bank, and soon the note of the bell-bird saluted our ears. The sound, in itself, is always pleasing ; but when heard in the evening by the traveller who, during the heat of a long day, has been threading a long maze of dry creeks, or toiling over arid ranges, with parched lips and burning tongue, it seems the most welcome and musical upon earth ; for it tells of cool streams and running waters, and never tells in vain.

At length we reached the Snowy River. It was high, but a "tea-tree" bush, which reared its head above the water, told us that we might venture to plunge in. E——, whose knowledge of the road was safely to be depended on, confirmed this opinion, and the stockkeeper vowed that it was "crossable."

The instructions given me for the ford were useful and to the point : "Make for yonder tea-tree bush ; as long as your horse feels the bottom, keep his head well 'up the stream ;' if he gets out of his depth, that instant give him every inch of rein, and he'll carry you over safe, if not dry."

Safe then, if not dry, we reached the opposite bank ; and as nobody catches cold in the fine climate of Australia, we pursued our route unscathed, and, after journeying on along the river-banks for about two hours, we recrossed it, and stood at the foot of the Nine-Mile Pinch, or, as it was called, par excellence, *the Pinch*. Our road, while we were on the low ground, was comparatively good. Occasionally we passed large patches of wild oats, so luxuriant that we could not resist the temptation of dismounting, and letting our hungry steeds enjoy them for a short time. Horses are excessively fond of this plant, so much so, that in the early part of the spring, when it shoots up sooner than other vegetation, they will not hesitate to swim over the river in quest of it. The waters at that time are frequently so much swollen as to prevent any one from crossing, so that the stockkeeper, after losing the track of his saddle-horses upon the river's edge, has the mortification of seeing them quietly grazing upon the other side ; and there they must necessarily remain, in

his despite, until the waters subsiding enable him to get across, or the runaways grow tired of wild oats and liberty.

Our sable companion pointed out to us one of the bark canoes of his tribe, as it lay upon the banks of the river. This is perhaps the most primitive boat in the world: like the "gunyio's," or huts, of the aborigines, it is built in a few minutes. An Australian black can always swim; but when the weather happens to be cold, or a ducking does not suit his purpose, he takes up his tomahawk, and searches the nearest part of the forest for a tree which has a boss, or protuberance, on its trunk. From this he strips off the bark, leaving about two feet on either side of the excrescence, and bringing both ends to a point. The sheet of bark, owing to the shape of the tree from which it has been taken, is sufficiently concave to exclude the water; to this frail conveyance he trusts himself, and, by dexterously balancing his body, he usually contrives to paddle across a river, and to gain the opposite bank in safety, leaving his funny little craft to float down the stream.

Bridges, as the foregoing account proves, are unknown upon the rivers far in the interior of Australia. There are none, and for some time will be none, for the best of all reasons in a young country—"it wouldn't pay." In some places, of more than usual traffic, a speculator sets up a punt, and makes a charge, varying with circumstances, for ferrying across the traveller and his luggage. This punt is usually nothing more than the trunk of a large tree, roughly hollowed out, and stopped up at each end. Having neither stem nor stern, it is unwieldy in the extreme, but, owing to its size and solidity, may be considered tolerably safe. When a dray is to be conveyed across, the wheels are usually taken off, and it is thus brought over "at twice."

The traveller on horseback has often a more troublesome task, and, if his steed be young or headstrong, sometimes meets with considerable delay. The assistance of the Charon of the bush is as necessary to the man with a horse as with a dray. On arriving at the river-bank, therefore, after shouting for the ferryman, who somehow always happens to be on the wrong side, he proceeds to take off his saddle and bridle, and these he safely deposits in the punt. His next task is to make his horse go over before him; but here is the difficulty. Notwith-

standing his favourite axiom, that "all horses can swim," and his conviction that his own in particular will "take the water like a duck," he generally finds that the sagacious animal, when he sees the swift-flowing stream, and hears the gurgling of the current, would much sooner remain on land, and indicates as much, pretty plainly, by resolutely planting his fore-feet in a straight line before him, and refusing to budge an inch. This difference of opinion produces a violent struggle, which often lasts until both parties are pretty well exhausted. At length the unhappy steed, finding that he must needs leave his natural element, plunges in, and, having been guided during his passage by means of such missiles as the river-bank affords, which are hurled after him in order to prevent his facing about, and landing again on the same side, at last, scared and panting, gains the opposite bank. His owner then follows him in the punt as quickly as possible, catches him directly,—if he can,—and goes on his way rejoicing.

But I have detained the reader too long at the bottom of the Nine-Mile Pinch. In spite of its name, the ascent was only four miles, in some places circuitous, in others direct. A choice of road was not to be had, and so up and up we went, with little inclination, and less breath, for talking. Sometimes we stopped to rest upon the landing-places which lay between the steeper parts of the hill; at others, to watch some vast fragment of granite, which, loosened by our horses' feet, plunged headlong to the bottom, occasionally bounding so high in its career that a horseman might have passed under it unharmed. At length we fairly reached the top, and looked down in triumph upon the enormous masses of eucalyptus, now far beneath our feet, which, when we stood on the river-bank, had towered above us in sombre majesty.

Travelling on a mile or two farther, we encamped for the night on the edge of a pretty mountain-stream, in the vicinity of rich grass for our horses. The climate, however, was sensibly changed, and, as the stockman remarked, it was at least "two great-coats colder" than on the banks of the river.

Next morning we resumed our journey with renewed alacrity; for its worst toils were gone and past: there were but three or our more "pinches," and of these only one was allowed to

deserve the name; and, more than all, that very evening our eyes were to be gladdened by a sight of Onio plains.

Meanwhile the same scenery met our eyes—forest, nothing but forest. Occasionally a snake, basking upon the arid track, would be seen to glide away, swift as an arrow, upon hearing the tramp of our horses' hoofs. Now and then a drove of half-wild cattle, "making back" to some former pasture-grounds, would descry us from the side of an adjacent steep, and rush headlong down it, laying low many a blooming sapling in their course, and making a lane through the tangled underwood. Now and then, as we passed one of the small green flats or quiet gullies which are interspersed among these arid ranges, our approach would disturb some old bull, who, driven from the plains by his younger and more vigorous rivals, had retired, like a surly philosopher, to end his days amidst these gloomy solitudes.

Notwithstanding all that has been said of the great sagacity of savages in tracking, and of their quickness in catching a distant sound, I strongly suspect that the white man, when he has been accustomed to this kind of "bushmanship" at an early age, generally proves his superior. I have seen many instances of this in Australia, and our present trip furnished us with a strong one.

We had travelled nearly half our day's journey, and were within a few miles of the one acknowledged steep pinch, called the "Freestone," which our third day's journey was to set before us. Not a leaf was stirring, and all nature seemed asleep, when E——'s stockkeeper, who had been listening attentively for a moment or two, reined in his steed, and said—

"Hark! I hear a herd of horses."

"Ay, ay!" said the black, incredulously; "bale me hear em: stupid fellow myself—I believe bale sit down" (I don't hear them myself; it may be my stupidity, but I think you are mistaken).

Upon which they both dismounted, and, holding their horses by the bridle, put their ears to the ground, and listened.

"Budgery you" (clever fellow, you), said the black, when he had satisfied himself that his companion was right. "I believe 'jump up yarraman' directly."

So it proved; and in a few minutes the sound of many hoofs, gradually swelling upon the ear, became distinctly audible. Drawing aside into the "scrub" that grew close to the track, we

waited to let the drove go by; for, as they were probably on their way to the capital, and could hardly as yet be sobered by the fatigues of the road, our presence might have scattered them far and wide, and perhaps occasioned the loss of several. In a twinkling they were at hand; and in truth it was a very imposing sight, as, amidst that wild mountain scenery, the whole troop swept past us, bays, blacks, chesnuts, and greys, sleek and fresh from their pastures, while the mighty patriarch of the herd brought up the rear, as if disdaining to betray a nervous haste, and acting "under protest." They were closely followed by an overseer and his man, who, on seeing us, dismounted, and stopped for a few minutes, the one to make inquiries about the state of the markets, the other to light his pipe with his fellow stockman. Their greeting was, however, cut short prematurely by a sudden alarm that the horses were "splitting," upon which both master and man were fain to spring again into the saddle, and gallop after them; the former being apparently unwilling to deny them the usual colonial merit of being "quite quiet," while the latter, with a slight difference of opinion, was heard to declare, as he set spurs to his steed, that, though he had been among horses since he was a child, his present lot were a set of the veriest "Russians" (Anglicè, wild things) *he* ever had anything to do with.

We were quite disappointed at the abrupt departure of our new friends. How welcome amidst these vast solitudes is a specimen, any specimen, of the human form divine: its situation lends it a momentary charm; as the vessel which, when in port, amidst a hundred others, would hardly attract a second look, far in the Atlantic becomes an object of the deepest interest; we sweep the horizon for one glimpse of its loftiest spar, and watch it until our aching eyes can gaze no more.

We now reached "the Freestone," a shorter hill than most of those we had surmounted, but, if possible, still more precipitous. We climbed up it with difficulty. The tracks of drays were still visible beneath our feet, though how they got up such a place seemed inexplicable. Every class of men has its hero, and I was informed that the only driver who could safely be depended on to take a team up "the Freestone" without an accident was a man known as "the pretty boy," a name which, as my friend E——

remarked, must have been given him by the old rule of "*lucus a non lucendo*," as he was one of the ugliest scoundrels that ever wore a head. He must, however, be invaluable in his line.

The sun was declining, and the mid-day heat was beginning to abate, as we arrived at the foot of some gently rising ground, over which the track led us. I was on the point of ascending it, when my companion suddenly wheeled round his horse, and, looking back at the country through which we had been travelling for the last three days, asked me what I thought of the prospect.

I was growing hungry and tired, and was glad of the opportunity of abusing the road which had caused us such endless difficulties. In fact, I saw only a mighty expanse of forest-land, stretching its brown and sombre masses in unbroken monotony, some trees rearing their blackened trunks in dismal array, others shedding their bark in slatternly and forlorn profusion. One shady beech, one stately elm, I thought had more beauty and verdure than the whole scene. Let those that will give it the false name of evergreen: it may never fade, but, alas! it has never flourished. So it must remain for ages, useless to man and beast, to re-echo no sound but the cry of the wild dog, or the tomahawk of the savage.

Something of this kind I expressed as I turned and resumed my journey. But when we had gained the summit of the little hill before us (it was not more than a hundred yards in length), that short distance showed us one of the most remarkable contrasts of scenery that ever met the eye of a traveller.

The gloomy forest had opened, and about two miles before, or rather beneath us—for the ground, thinly dotted with trees, sloped gently downwards—lay a plain about seven miles in breadth. Its centre was occupied by a lagoon, in some parts thickly covered with sedge, in others showing a clear expanse of water. On either side of this the plain, for some distance, was as level as a bowling-green, until it was met by the forest, which shelved picturesquely down towards it, gradually decreasing in its vast masses until they ended in a single tree. In the vicinity of the forest the ground was varied by gentle undulations, which, as they intersected each other, formed innumerable grassy creeks and open flats, occasionally adorned with native honeysuckles

and acacias, and affording numberless retreats for the stately herds which occupied the plain. Two remarkable conical hills, perfectly free from timber, rose in the middle of the largest plain, dividing it about half way, and a clear and winding stream skirted it on our right. The whole, as far as the eye could reach, was clothed with a thick coat of grass, rich and luxuriant, as if the drought, so destructive elsewhere, had never reached this favoured spot.

It was Omio plain. But by what accident, or rather by what strange freak of nature, came it there? A mighty belt of forest, for the most part destitute of verdure, and forming as uninviting a region as could well be found, closed it in on every side for fifty miles; but there, isolated in the midst of a wilderness of desolation, lay this beautiful place, so fair, so smiling, that we could have forgotten hunger, thirst, and all the toils of the road, and been content to gaze on it while light remained.

After a long weary ride through the dismal forest, how delightful, how exhilarating, is a canter across this beautiful country! The very horses seem to catch the enthusiasm, and to forget their past toils, as they leave the odious gum-trees behind them. E—— was fully alive to the influence of the scene; not a group of half-wild horses or cattle crossed our track but he would dash in among them, and scatter them far and wide over the plain, under pretence of seeing whether any of his own were with them, but evidently from sheer delight. We felt as little fatigued as if we had but just then left our last night's encampment, though we were now close at our journey's end, and a thin white smoke, curling upwards in the clear evening air, showed us our resting-place for the night.

Arrived at the station, we proceeded to make ourselves at home in the usual cool way of travellers in the interior of New South Wales, while our horses rolled in front of the door, and then trooped off to the adjacent lake. We found that the owner was not resident, but left the charge of his affairs in this distant region to an overseer, who therefore was our host for the night. He was hospitable of course, hospitality being, as I have before said, almost universal in the bush of Australia; but his welcome was not cheery, it did not seem to come from the heart. He was a man who had met with many losses in the country, and, when little else was left him to lose, had apparently lost—his

temper, and turned grumbler and alarmist. Many such there are, in old countries as well as in new, who, not having succeeded according to their own estimate of their deserts, (though perhaps their deserts if duly weighed would hardly have saved them from Hamlet's sentence of a whipping,) are soured by disappointment, and make their company insufferable by invidious and unfair comparisons, and a long detail of grievances, which they have not sense enough to conceal, nor candour enough to impute to their own mismanagement.

But who could feel discontent at Omio? who that was alive to the beauties of scenery could become weary of this lovely spot? It was indeed beautiful as the day was long, ay, and the night too. At dawn, when the early breeze breathed buoyancy and hope—at noon, when the wild horse basked on the edge of its glassy lake, the platypus floated on its surface, and, in the midst of the heat, everything recalled to the mind only freshness and repose—again, in the evening, when the countless herds, sleek and contented, trooped off towards the lengthening shades of the forest—and, above all, at night, when the mild southern cross looked down upon the scene, and the moon, gradually rising from behind the dark mass of forest that lowered around, seemed to leave it with joy, and to shine for the plain alone.

At Omio we saw a tame "native companion," a large bird indigenous to Australia, of the adjutant species. Men living in these distant regions are very fond of "pets," and we occasionally met with some highly accomplished natives of the bush. With the exception of the wild dog, which, like the tiger, can never be thoroughly tamed, most Australian animals are easily domesticated. The kangaroo, if caught young, not only soon forgets its wild nature, but is apt to fall into the other extreme, and become intrusively familiar; and where there is a large white cockatoo, which is perhaps the best talking bird yet discovered, nothing is safe for a moment that is not as hard as iron. Like a monkey, he is never happy but when in mischief, and then, if the owner of the damaged property, perhaps a new English saddle, flies to its rescue, he sets up his fine flame-coloured crest, and opens his large eyes with an air of indignant remonstrance, as if he had been interrupted in the performance of a meritorious service.

The numerous family of the parrot tribe are, as may be supposed, universal favourites, though they soon cease to be prized highly in a country where they may be seen as commonly as sparrows in England, taking their short low flights in flocks of twenty or thirty together. The sorts which (unhappily for them) are most "fancied" are the green leek, the king parrot, the rosella, the blue mountain parrot, and, above all, the lorie, with his splendid livery of blue and green.

The beauties of the lorie, however, have been eclipsed by a most brilliant little parrot, found, I believe, on or near the river Lachlan. It is about the size of a bullfinch, and is called the budgery garr (budgery, in the blacks' language, meaning good or handsome). It is easily tamed, and bears confinement less uneasily than any other species. Its shape is very elegant, and on each side of its throat, which is of a bright yellow, are two deep blue spots, like the eyes on the peacock's tail.

It was at Omio that I first heard the shocking story, known, alas! to be too true, of the white woman who has for some time been detained among the wild blacks of the southern coast. She had been sent at an early age to England, for the purpose of completing her education, and was returning to her friends in the prime of youth, when the vessel in which she was a passenger was wrecked in Bass's Straits, within two days' sail of Sydney. Part of the crew had been drowned, and the few that reached the shore, with the exception of this ill-fated girl, were massacred by the blacks. Numerous parties, chiefly composed of residents in the adjacent districts, some induced by a large reward, others by a better feeling, have at various times set out to recapture her and restore her to her family, but as yet, I believe, without success. Vast tracts of the country in which she is known to be confined are thickly wooded and broken, and in many parts it is almost impenetrable. But there are other, and even greater difficulties to be surmounted by those who undertake the pursuit of the savages. They must not only traverse these almost inaccessible regions, at times without the bare satisfaction of knowing that they are on the right scent, but they must also use the utmost caution to conceal their intentions; for there is good reason to fear that, if the blacks found themselves unable to carry away their victim, they would, by a blow of a waddie, put

an end to her sufferings, and thus frustrate the exertions of her rescuers, when upon the point of meeting with success. The colonists have made great efforts towards her recovery, and ultimately it is to be hoped they will rescue the unfortunate sufferer. She has been seen now and then. It is said that she is always attended by a black, who watches her with great vigilance.

Her lot has indeed been dreadful. At a time of life when the faculties are most vigorous, and the sensibility is keenest, when education had given her all the accomplishments of civilized life, and cultivated her sense of its refinements, to be torn away from all she loved, at the moment when she hoped to be united to them for life, and to become the prey of the most barbarous race of men upon earth. Death, under any shape, would have been preferable—the club of the savage, or a virgin grave beneath the waters of the Pacific.

Our destination was far beyond Omio, and we resumed our journey after a day's rest. No sooner had we left the plain than the same gloomy forest rose around us. The distance of one mile from this paradise, on either side, effaced all vestiges of its scenery. On our return I turned aside, and lingered for a day or two in a beautiful station at the edge of the plain, unwilling to leave it too soon, and even wishing that the loss of our horses, the only acknowledged cause of detention to the traveller in the bush, might furnish a pretext for delay.

At this station, among several others, had recently occurred a strong instance of the annoyances to which her Majesty's subjects residing in these remote districts are occasionally liable. The neighbourhood had been infested by a gang of bush-rangers, who, being well armed and mounted, had little cause to fear the mounted police, still less the few settlers occupying that part of the country, and did pretty much as they pleased. Their ringleader, it appears, had so much spare time upon his hands, that upon one occasion he had paid a visit to the station, during the absence of its proprietor, and had ordered dinner to be served up, quick and hot; then, sending for a "fig" of the best tobacco that the place afforded—none of your colonial trash, but right Virginian—had entertained the cook, while he tested its flavour, with his opinion of the various breeds of

horses in the neighbourhood, an opinion which, as he or some of his party had during their long career taken horses from nearly every station, and ridden them until they stood still from exhaustion, might be considered well worth having. Finally, before taking his departure, he had praised his absent entertainer as a "good sort of a man," and, "unkindest cut of all," had carved his name upon the dining-table.

Such was the last incident worthy of note during our expedition; and we shortly returned through the same toilsome road (with the difference that we had to go down the "Free-stone" and the "Pinch," and up the "Gulf") until we once more found ourselves in the open country, where we long talked and looked back with pleasure upon my first and only trip to Omio.

A few years hence, amid the rapid progress of Australia, who shall say what change may fall upon the scene we have described? Of that fair spot, as it now is, who can say how few vestiges shall remain? Already, as the white man advances, the native features of the landscape are effaced, the dusky sons of the soil grow fewer and feebler still. Shall we not admire the energy that works this change in the land, and rejoice that its sleep has at length been broken? Yet must we not, on the other hand, feel pity for the helpless savage—whose territory we ruthlessly wrest from him—whose means of subsistence we destroy,—the very remnants of whose race, like some dream of youth, are doomed to pass away, and be seen no more?

CHAPTER XIII.

The Overlanders—Their Qualifications—Peculiar Life—Incidents of an Overland Journey—Crossing a River with Stock—Native Names—Beneficial Results of the Overlanders' Exertions—Industry and Idleness—A Contrast—The Settler's Grave—The Two Emigrants—The Haunted Station—The Reformed Convict.

AMONG the most remarkable characters to be met with in Australia are the "Overlanders," men who make long expeditions from one part of the country to another with stock, either for the purpose of seeking a good market, or of forming new stations in a land of greater promise than that which they had originally occupied. The toils they undergo, the perils they must surmount, the enterprising nature of their plans, while they cause the less energetic colonist to quail before them, have, at the same time, an air of wild adventure, which throws a powerful charm over the occupation of the overlanders. Theirs is, in fact, the romance of pastoral speculation—the poetry of life in the bush.

Individuals of classes and characters the most widely different are to be found among them. Some are men of good birth and education, others as rude as their own stockmen. Whatever be their qualifications in other respects, they must all, in common, be possessed of a tolerably large capital, a good knowledge of stock, considerable bodily strength, and, above all, coolness and determination, with ready wit to assist them in moments of emergency.

The expense of driving a large quantity of stock overland being considerably less in proportion than that required for a small number, it is only extensive stockowners who can embark with advantage in this kind of speculation. The overlander starts with property which must necessarily be of great value in his charge, consisting perhaps of six or seven thousand sheep, a thousand head of horned cattle, and eighty or a hundred horses,

besides drays, pack-bullocks, and other minor appurtenances. With these he has to penetrate a country he has never traversed before, to a distance of perhaps a thousand miles. He must run many serious risks, such as drought, the loss of his property from fatigue, the disaffection or desertion of his men in regions where no more are procurable, and he must be prepared to sustain the sudden and troublesome, though desultory, attacks of the hostile tribes of blacks through whose country he must unavoidably pass. Above all, he must run the risk of a fall in prices ere he can reach the distant market to which he is wending his way, with the greatest part, perhaps the whole, of his worldly wealth. But having once cast the die, he must stand its hazard, and he cares little for the difficulties and dangers of the road, well knowing that at its conclusion, should he meet with tolerable success, he may double his capital in the course of a few months.

If a life of this kind is beset with uncertainty and hardship, it has, on the other hand, many attractions, and I never met with an overlander who did not look back upon his long expeditions with pride and pleasure, even when their result, in point of profit, had fallen short of his expectations. At first starting the utmost care and vigilance are necessary to control, both by day and night, the numerous flocks and herds, ever seeking for an opportunity to escape; but after they have been on the road a week or two, they become much more docile, and their owner soon finds leisure to vary the tedious length of the journey by a little hunting or shooting, or, what is still more interesting, by exploring the country through which he is passing. The ever-varying scenery, too, through which the line of march leads him, tends greatly to lighten the monotony of the way. Sometimes the route takes him through a huge mass of forest, then across some pretty park-like plains; now he must toil over arid and stony ridges scorched with drought, or, again, he may forget his toils as he follows the windings of some deep-flowing stream, which rolls its waters towards the place of his destination. Should it, however, be necessary to cross it with horses or horned cattle, a very animated and remarkable scene ensues.

Shortly before the party arrives at the river's bank, a horseman gallops ahead to reconnoitre the ford and the nature of the ground on either side, and, as soon as he has satisfied himself on

these points, rejoins his party, who are by this time not more than a quarter of a mile off, awaiting his return. Every man now tightens his girths, settles himself firmly in his saddle, and examines the lash of his stockwhip, in readiness for the approaching struggle. The fear is lest the first attempt should fail, for, if it does, the animals are apt to be seized with a general panic, and refuse to go near the water in spite of every exertion, so that a delay of several days, and even weeks, may be the result. When, therefore, they are within some three hundred yards of the crossing-place, the herd, which has latterly been suffered to travel lazily along, is roused into sudden action by the united efforts of the drivers, the foremost animals being stimulated by shouts and screams, while the hindmost are well belaboured with the lash. They are now within sight of the water, and the leaders would certainly stop short—if they could, but it is then too late. The shouts of the men are redoubled, the whole herd is by this time at top speed, “vires acquirit eundo;” in they must plunge; the hindmost, glad to escape the discipline of the whip, rush in pell-mell upon the rest, and force them on; for a few minutes the broad stream shows the unwonted sight of innumerable vast heads and horns just peering above its surface, and the opposite bank is gained. In short, as an old overlander once remarked to me, “keep the leaders’ heads straight, and the hindmost well up, the whole *must* go over; they can’t help it.”

But woe betide the luckless animal, whether horse or bullock, which, leaving its companions, starts back affrighted on the bank, and scours over the plains! In an instant he is detected, and a horseman, whip in hand, is alongside of him: let him go where he will, his pursuer follows as closely as his shadow; a crowd of dogs are at his heels, until he is glad to turn and spring into the water, convinced that the land, at least on the wrong side of the river, is too hot to hold him.

It is difficult to conceive the astonishment, the sort of supernatural terror, with which a tribe of blacks, as yet perhaps ignorant of the white man’s existence, must regard, from some adjacent range or “scrub,” the whole of these proceedings. Their fear at the first sight of a horse and his rider has always been intense, as they usually mistake the two for one animal;

in their eyes it appears a species of centaur. And then to encounter suddenly some dozen of these monsters, shouting and galloping over their hitherto undisturbed region, must strike them with a degree of alarm which no language can exaggerate.

Many of the rivers, mountains, remarkable spots, and tracts of country, have been named by the overlanders; and though the local government sometimes disapproves of these titles, and orders them to be subsequently changed, yet they are frequently retained from the force of early habit; hence, from his choice of names, it is easy to conjecture the country to which the first explorer of a district has belonged. Some of the native names are very pretty, and their meaning is often poetical; others, again, are equally cacophonous; in general the plurality of *o*'s is remarkable. Of those that I recollect, many, such as Bungōnia, Taralga, Ōmīō, Illawarra, Wolumlah, and Marūlan, were sufficiently euphonous: on the other hand, there are numberless such queer-sounding ones as Woolloomooloo, Wollongong, Jemmīcumbeen, Wolgullōmōrang, Sukenbōka, Wog-Wog, and Bong-Bong, the latter a place about a hundred miles from Sydney, which the march of civilization (we will not call it improvement) has changed into Bung-Bung.

Upon the whole it appears far better taste to adopt the native names, wherever they exist. It is wearisome to hear of Windsor, Richmond, and other such familiar nominations at the antipodes; and perhaps not a little tantalizing when they are given to places which, as the York coachman is said to have remarked of New York, could only be recognised by being so totally *unlike* their namesakes in England. As for such names as "Jerry's Plains," "Patrick's Plains," "Paddy's River," and many others not more dignified, it seems a cruelty to inflict them on a new country. In after-times, when the Sydney papers teem with "fashionable movements," how will it sound that Mr. So-and-so has arrived from his seat at "Gammon Plains"? Who will ever believe in the existence of such a place? How could such a property be offered for sale? What new comer to the colony, well primed with cautions against credulity and the tricks of auctioneers, would undertake a journey to look at it? He might as well (he will think) put to sea in search of the famous "Cape Flyaway" of hoaxing mariners. Such names, in

short, should be dropped at once, and others substituted more creditable to the taste of the inventors, and better suited to the future prospects of the country.

The enterprising spirit of the overlander is not only profitable to himself, but it is also indirectly beneficial to the colony at large. By transporting stock from a part of the country where its rapid increase has grievously thinned the pastures, and produced a ruinous deterioration in its value, to another where the supply is still insufficient, he promotes the advantage of the public not less than his own. He is also, in many cases, the pioneer of civilization: through his means many a fine tract of unoccupied land, the existence of which had been previously unknown, starts into newness of life, bringing wealth to some, and occupation to many more.

He is, moreover, a striking example of the aptitude of the Anglo-Saxon for the task of colonizing, and developing the resources of a new country. Let its nature and capabilities demand in its colonists what qualifications they will, immediately a race of men starts up both willing and able to supply the demand, whatever it may be, and however little in accordance with their previous habits. Some will fail no doubt, but many succeed, and by their success become the originators of an occupation, or branch of business, which thenceforth is peculiarly their own.

Visible as are the effects, in all places, of industry and economy on one hand, and of idleness and mismanagement on the other, perhaps nowhere is the contrast so striking as in a new country. It is difficult to overstate the degree of success which may attend the man who, full of energy and hope, admits no evil to be incurable till he has tried to cure it, or the degree of discomfort which may be accumulated about the dwelling of one who folds his arms in indolent despair, and trusts to some unknown agency (to which he gives the vague name of "better times") to bring about that which might quickly be effected by his own exertions.

About twenty miles from us dwelt two men, of that class usually known as small settlers. Neither was superior to the other in point of natural talent or education. Both had begun with a small capital, both were married and resided on their stations. The means of both were alike, yet nothing more different could be imagined than the results obtained.

The first occupied part of a fine open creek, skirted with forest, which, jutting out here and there, formed several sequestered nooks, in one of which, combining the usual requisites of wood and water, he had erected his improvements, the whole of them neatly constructed, and kept in excellent repair. Two large stacks of wheat, and another of hay, stood in an adjacent yard, and the sound of the flail might be heard until a late hour every day. It was a dairy station too, and sixty or seventy fine cows were milked at sunrise every morning, and brought home from the pastures in the evening to suckle their calves. The dairy itself was a pattern of cleanliness and good order, and several sleek porkers in a sty close at hand gave evident proofs that the skimmed milk had not been wasted. There was an excellent kitchen-garden, strongly fenced in, and containing nearly all kinds of vegetables used in England, and poultry swarmed at every turn and corner. At sunset a small but well-conditioned drove of horses came home, of their own accord, from their distant pasture-grounds, to pick up anything that might be given them, and attracted principally by the rock-salt, which was strewed about the place to encourage these visits, as they are so fond of it that they will continue to lick it for hours together. It was a pleasure to witness the regularity and well-ordered routine with which everything about the station was carried on. Nor was the internal economy less creditable to the mistress of the mansion. The four rooms of which it was composed were all clean and comfortable. In the one that served for dining-room and kitchen the ceiling was hung with divers articles indicative of good housekeeping—prime joints of dried beef and flitches of bacon, interspersed with pumpkins and melons, and “cobs” of Indian corn. The furniture, though rude, was well arranged, and the dresser, made of colonial pine, was as clean and white as snow. The family consisted of three or four girls, neatly dressed, and looking happy; the eldest was busily employed in making wheat-straw hats, which we were informed were so much prized in the neighbourhood that the demand far exceeded the supply; while several well-thumbed spelling and copybooks, on an adjacent shelf, shewed that the youngest were making the best of their time. The whole economy of the station, in its daily routine, resembled that of a prosperous farm in England.

We must now turn to the contrast. A ride of a few miles only, to the other end of the creek, brings us to a very different scene. Here, too, the site of the station is pretty, but, the stock having been carelessly allowed to graze too near the place, the herbage around is scanty, giving it a faded and untidy appearance. The owner is a thin, anxious-looking man, with a restless eye and manner. He is evidently aware of the unpromising aspect of his farm, but is unwilling to take the least part of the blame to himself, and lays it all on some other cause, chiefly the ways of the country, his own ill luck, and the badness of the times. The buildings are awkwardly patched and repaired in all directions, apparently at the cost of more labour than would have been required to restore them completely. The bark is falling off the roof of the house in several places, and is replaced by unseemly pieces of dry hide, which are kept down by large stones. "They are 'going' to get new bark—when the blacks come to strip it." The cattle have strayed away in great numbers, and are to be found on everybody's ground but their owner's, while his saddle-horses are all knocked up with hunting them. "It was then too late in the season to muster, but when spring came he'd make some of them come back faster than they went away—that he would." The wheat-paddock is filled with stray stock of all kinds, which never go in and out by the same gap. "Grain would be low next year, and it would be cheaper to buy than to cultivate." There are plenty of pigs "on the station," but they "run" two or three miles off, and are seen, on an average, not oftener than once a-month. However, "they 'do better' at large, in a warm country, than when pent up in a sty." Butter there is none—"In a country where there are no navigable rivers, it 'don't pay' at that distance from market." Two cows are kept for milk, or rather only one, for the other is being "broken in," and seldom comes home until she is fetched with horse and whip at her heels, and when she *is* in the yard no living soul could milk her. "But cows," he remarks, "are like working oxen; he liked them to be rather wild at first, they always turned out best in the long run: quiet ones are apt to grow sulky."

Towards evening the report of a stockwhip is heard in the distance, and presently the hopeful son and heir appears in sight,

—a well-looking and spirited youth, but utterly neglected, and wild as the horses he has been hunting. Of his day's sport he gives a graphic account, in his own desultory style:—How he has been out all day, not on his own business, but because he had been bent upon running down a certain black mare, the property of a neighbour, which had hitherto defied all pursuit, and was known (from a lagoon near which she was usually found) by the title of the "Lady of the Lake"—how they had started in chase of this intractable lady, determined to drive her into the enclosures at all risks—how they had got on her track, had found her in the ranges, had run her "breast-high," till she was forced to betake herself to the open country—how they had "stuck to her" for several hours, until at last they had brought her in, more dead than alive, to the enclosures, whence she was not to be liberated until she and the saddle had become well acquainted with each other. He winds up his discourse with an emphatic panegyric upon the horse he is riding, declaring that he improves in his galloping after the first four or five miles, and defying the colony to produce his equal.

The fond parent listens to this eventful story with intense interest, and at its conclusion expresses his entire approbation of the whole proceedings. As his son turns away he gazes after him with irrepressible satisfaction. He was "no scholar," he says, but for all that he "knew what o'clock it was," and for cracking a stockwhip, or sitting a buckjumper, he'd back him against any member of the legislative council. Whether some of this energy would not have been better employed in improving the aspect of affairs at home, never seemed to enter the heads of either father or son.

As might be expected, the domestic arrangements are not superior to the external. In Australia, where the necessities of life are now so cheap, want is out of the question, but waste and negligence will produce an imitation of many of the evils of want. Books there are none; and a hot argument between father and son, as to whether centipede was spelt with an x! proves that the disputants are, indeed, "no scholars."

What a widely different account these two men, precisely similar in means and station, would give of the bush! One is living in greater comfort than he had previously known, and

continues to increase it year after year: the other meanwhile becomes daily more unsettled, while his energies grow rusty for want of play, and poverty gradually overtakes him as he neglects the present, and rests his hopes on "better times."

Exactly the same observations apply to settlers of the higher class. Among these it is not uncommon to meet one who is always at fault for some necessary article, who has apparently expunged the word comfort from his vocabulary since he left the mother country, and seems to care for nothing but how he may just rub on from one wool-season to another. His example spreads an enervating influence over all around him, and the unsettled appearance of such a station bespeaks the character of its owner. But how different is the picture of a well-managed establishment! On or about it nearly every necessary tradesman is to be found, attracted thither by the energy of their employer. There is a tailor, shoemaker, blacksmith, and carpenter; the stock-keepers are all butchers, and the cook or hut-keeper must also have a tolerable insight into the mysteries of baking. The owner's private store contains the groceries and haberdashery, and his medicine-chest is the apothecary's shop. Besides these there are various other articles, of minor importance, manufactured on the station, and, upon the whole, many a rising inland township is far worse provided with the conveniences of life.

Lastly, in some sequestered nook, hidden from view by clustering evergreens, lies the burial-ground of the far settler. Such a spot, unconsecrated though it be, has of itself an air of calm solemnity which commands respect, even from the rudest denizens of the bush. Ours, I remember, had five or six tenants, nearly all of whom had met with a violent death; for in the fine climate of Australia little is to be feared from disease. Its first occupant had been speared by the blacks, ere they had learned to fear the superior power of the firelock. Another must have died in great suffering, having mistaken corrosive sublimate for Epsom salts. A third had been killed by a fall from a horse. Its latest tenant, an Irish emigrant, had met with his death under very painful circumstances. He was one of two fellow-villagers, who had left their native country in the same ship, and reached Australia with their wives and families. They were both steady and industrious, had surmounted their worst hardships, and were beginning to

save money, and to rejoice in their dawning prosperity. But this happiness was not to last. Some trifling quarrel arose between them as they were shepherding together, the eternal shilelagh was at hand, and a single blow sent one of the emigrants to the convict's chain, and the other to his last home, in the land which they had sought and learned to love together.

A remarkable instance of the strange losses to which the stockowner in the interior of Australia is liable, occurred in our neighbourhood. The case was unique, and it was one that could neither have been anticipated nor prevented. At a few miles distance from us there was a fine station, which had hitherto been very prosperous, until one unlucky day two men, who were at work upon it, died somewhat suddenly near the same spot. From this cause rose an idle report, which rapidly gained belief, that the station was haunted! It was useless to remonstrate with the men, not one of them would engage to live on it; and the luckless owner was consequently forced to pull down the whole of his buildings, at a great loss, and erect them again in another place that was voted "more canny."

I have written thus far without having once touched upon what I have always thought one of the most remarkable sights, and the most gratifying, which Australia can boast—the reformed convict; the man who, having been rejected by the place of his birth, and of his early crime, has paid the penalty, has passed the period of his disgrace, and has returned to a better life in another land.

That the majority, or even a large number, of offenders thus sentenced reform, I will not undertake to affirm; that many do, few travellers in Australia will deny. Whether the criminal's repentance is in each case the result of that thorough spiritual conversion which the Christian would desire to see, might be hard to decide. It may be, or it may not. But is it a small matter that the outward behaviour of the penitent is decent, and his habits regular, that the vices of his youth are discontinued, his old intimacies dropped, and his thoughts and wishes taught to flow in a new channel?

Here at least the foundation is laid for a true and complete conversion. If more be needed, how easily might a zealous clergyman, or a kind and pious master, drop the good seed,

and how readily would it spring up in ground so well prepared !

When the eye opens on such a boundless field of usefulness, lighted up and cheered by such bright rays of hope, it is impossible not to wish to see greater exertions made. Australia has indeed dark shadows, as well as bright lights ; few countries can show such fearful pictures of utter depravity, of self-consuming vice, which yields obedience to no law but that of physical force. But in no case should we despair ; in general sudden conversions are the result only of unexpected and appalling circumstances. In ordinary cases men must be civilized before they can be Christianized ; misery must be expelled from the sinner's abode before religion can be introduced : and hence it is that in Australia, where worldly success is so immediately and so visibly the result of any reform in conduct, and where want is scarcely known, the missionary of reformation may expect a degree of success beyond what the greatest zeal and ability could obtain for the preacher who labours among the vicious part of our poorer population at home.

CHAPTER XIV.

Female Society in the Bush—Matrimony—Feminine Occupations in the Far Districts—Education of Children—Hints to Emigrants and Capitalists of the present Day—Advisable Course to pursue on first engaging in Pastoral Pursuits—The best Way to gain Experience—General Remarks.

I MIGHT add much more ; the recollections of many years would serve to swell out my volume with yet undescribed scenes of colonial life—scenes of industry and enterprise, of excitement and loneliness, of deep disappointment and unexpected success. But enough has been said to tell the young adventurer what he may hope, and what he must learn to forego, if he seeks to make himself a home in the bush of Australia.

Of one important omission I am still conscious—an omission which will go further with most readers to convey an idea of want of civilization in “the bush” than the most flattering descriptions can remove. I have hardly touched on the condition of women in those far regions, the state of female society, and its influence in polishing the manners and softening the hardships of a pastoral life.

It is true that though woman must, in every English home, play an important part, it is not in “the bush” a prominent one. Her domestic duties are so engrossing, that if she had the power she has scarcely the time to stir abroad ; of society, as we understand the word, there is little or none. The management of her household affairs requires constant attention, and the difficulty of finding tolerable servants, especially female servants, and of keeping them when found, reduces her to perform offices to which she had previously been unaccustomed. But then (some reader may perhaps anxiously ask), are the hardships and privations such that no man of feeling could bear to expose his wife to them, and that no man, without culpable selfishness, could ask any woman to share them with him ? Not to trifle with the impatience of such a questioner, I answer at once, certainly not.

It must be remembered that the sting of all such inconveniences in a civilized country lies in the mortification which they inflict on our pride; they are painful, not in themselves, but because they are considered degrading. When the performance of almost menial services meets applause instead of a sneer, when it is no proof of want of refinement, nor even of poverty, the hardship vanishes at once. Where is the great difference between watering a flower-bed and dusting a drawing-room, if we remove ourselves from the conventional influence of the notions which assign one task to the housemaid and the other to the lady of the mansion?

As long as the settler went to his station with the hope of returning to England in a few years with a competent fortune, it was natural that he should defer the intention of establishing himself till he had affluence and a more luxurious home to offer; but now that he must make "the bush" his home, his lot would indeed be hard if he were doomed to toil on in solitude and selfishness, uncheered by objects of affection, whose smile might repay his labours, with no other motive than to supply his own daily wants, or amass wealth for he cares not whom. To all who have not more than common resources in themselves, the solitude of "the bush" is at times very oppressive. To relieve this in some degree it is not unusual for settlers to enter into partnership and unite their establishments at the same station. But the difficulties of making any such arrangement, with a prospect of mutual satisfaction, are obviously great, and the difficulties of carrying it out are still greater. Even in the full tide of prosperity it is not easy to maintain harmony between the parties; in the ebb of adversity it is scarcely possible; and such agreements are generally of short duration.

It is usually remarked in the colony that single men are apt to neglect their affairs, being glad to avail themselves of every pretext for leaving home in quest of society, or, if they remain there, they are often driven to seek solace in intemperance; and the usual homely practical advice given to a young man, as soon as he has got a little settled and "sees his way before him," is to take a wife as speedily as possible. My own observation tends to confirm the wisdom of this advice. I have always remarked that the happiest homes in the interior of Australia were

those over which a lady presided, and the most contented, and usually the most prosperous settlers, must be looked for among those who in woman's love have found a balm for disappointment, and the noblest stimulus to exertion.

But is the prospect of the bush, after all, so very alarming? How much can taste and refinement do to dignify and embellish the settler's home! It is far from uncomfortable; it has not been improved perhaps so much as it might have been, for the frequent changes in the government regulations respecting the bush have shaken the settler's confidence in his tenure, and he is unwilling to lay out capital on improvements which promise no return: but it is not inconvenient, and woman's taste may make it elegant. As the nests of certain birds are distinguished by the delicacy of their texture and materials, so woman's home betrays itself, even in the bush of Australia. The garden, too, admits of improvement, and affords an agreeable out-of-doors occupation. At all stations there is an excellent kitchen-garden; the native fruits are few; the principal is a sort of currant, too acid to be generally popular, but the fruits of England and many other countries may be naturalized with ease: the vine will flourish in most parts of the colony. I have seen some good flower-gardens very far in the interior, and, as leisure increases, the cultivation of these may be more carefully attended to. The Flora of Australia is very beautiful and delicate, though truth compels me to own that Australian flowers have little perfume. The hours in the bush are early, but the wife will have no difficulty in keeping the hours of her husband; and what resident in Australia would not be amply repaid for the exertion of early rising by the beauty and delicious coolness of the dawn?

The evenings, after the business of the day is over, are sometimes rather long, for there is little or no twilight at the antipodes; but this time is precious in the bush, as it affords leisure for an important duty in the settler's life—the duty of keeping up whatever accomplishments and cultivated tastes he has brought with him, and most of all a taste for reading. Let a young married couple beware lest the novelty of bush life, its toils and cares, or the charms of each other's society, wean them from those habits of mental cultivation which are more easily lost

than acquired. The time will come when they will bitterly lament, for their own sakes, having neglected any means they once possessed of giving interest, variety, and even dignity to a pastoral life. This regret will be most severely felt for the sake of their family, when they have children of an age to be taught. The time will soon come when they must decide on the alternative of an early separation from their children (if indeed they have the means of sending them to school, and persons to whom they can entrust them), or, on the other hand, of seeing them grow up at home with hardly better manners and breeding than those of a shepherd or stock-keeper.

One great and painful difficulty is found in carrying on education in the bush—I mean that of preventing children from associating with, and learning the language and manners of those whom, from sheer necessity, the settler in the far districts is often forced to employ as house-servants. This is a source of much anxiety, and the evil can only be obviated by watchful care. But the subject suggests to me, naturally, what I conceive to be the true mission of woman in the bush of Australia—to civilize and Christianize its rising population by her influence, example, and gentle persuasion. With so noble a field for utility before her, no woman, such as I picture her to my imagination, would repine at some curtailment of the luxuries, or rather, shall I say, the feverish excitements of life; while her usefulness, thus employed, may, in its remote effects, last to the end of time.

Man is too much occupied in the active and toilsome cares of the day; he wants the delicate tact, the instinctive sympathy to touch and persuade. It is woman that must prepare the way, and aid the diffusion of religious instruction, or the clergyman will labour in vain. The persuasion that “the bush” must now be the settler’s home, and the consequently increased frequency of marriage, will do more for the civilization of the interior of Australia in a few years than a century could have done, had it continued to be tenanted by a rapid succession of temporary residents.

Before I conclude I have yet a few words of advice to offer to those who, without any previous colonial experience, intend to

visit Australia for the purpose of engaging in pastoral pursuits, or who, feeling, from their own peculiar circumstances, the oppressive solitude of a crowd in a crowded land, may wish to leave it,

“Perchance, beyond the waves to find
Some happier home, some country less unkind.”

It is a common saying in Australia that nobody makes, eventually, so good a settler as the man who has bought his experience, or who, as the phrase goes, has been well “victimized.” No doubt in the colonies, as in most other parts of the world, knowledge purchased at such a cost is most deeply impressed and longest retained; but experience itself may be bought too dear, and surely it is always bought too dear if it might have been bought at a cheaper rate. The capitalist who could not gain an insight into his intended pursuits without greatly decreasing the money which he travelled so far to invest, is in no better plight than a vessel which, after outliving a severe gale, arrives in port, but at the cost of having thrown overboard the greater part of her cargo.

Among those who, a few years ago, visited the colony, a notion seemed to prevail that, although for other occupations some previous preparation might be necessary, a knowledge of the management of a stock establishment in the interior of New South Wales was to be gained by intuition. Whence this delusion arose it would perhaps be difficult to ascertain, but so it frequently happened, that young men, who had just left England, as ignorant of stock and farming in all its branches as a totally different education could make them, would take it for granted, when fairly landed in Sydney, that they were at once fully competent to be the managers of a large station in the interior. This notion, which has now fortunately become less frequent, cannot be too forcibly combated; for though no high order of intellect may be required to learn the routine of a settler's life, yet the new comer may be assured, that without the previous acquisition of knowledge, and the judicious application of it when acquired, it will be in vain to hope for success.

The first object of the young colonist when he lands in Australia should be to endeavour to see things as they are, not through the magnifying glass of his hopes and wishes. Many a

capitalist is so impatient to plunge at once into the full tide of business, that all reflection is laid aside; he has come out for the purpose of buying stock, and stock he must buy, reasonably if possible, but stock at any sacrifice: the consequence is, that when experience, the only monitor in such cases, brings home to him the consequences of his error, he blames the country, its ways, his bad fortune, in short anything but the real cause—his own rashness, and that ignorance “which finds not, till it feels.”

There is something in the very atmosphere of Sydney which seems to inspire the new comer with rashness, and to hurry him on to inconsiderate purchases. The novelty of his situation, the recollection of his professed purpose on leaving England, and perhaps of all the castles in the air which he has built during his passage out, tend to augment his impetuosity. The passion for wealth, which his previous education has hitherto allowed to lie dormant, is roused into sudden and ungovernable activity. He looks around him and finds, in this his new sphere, that the love of gain reigns paramount and supreme. If he takes up a ‘Sydney Herald,’ he finds it full of advertisements “to capitalists and monied men,” urging them “not to lose a moment in availing themselves of this excellent opportunity now offered,” which the auctioneer “feels confident in stating may never occur again,” of “making a fortune.” An afternoon’s walk through the streets shows him scarcely anything but the eager look and puckered mouth of the man of business; his acquaintances all talk to him about “investment,” and at the dinner-table he still meets his friends with “speculation in their eyes.” It is therefore very difficult for the stranger to resist the force of an example so constantly acting upon him; his coolness soon deserts him; he is carried away by the stream, and learns to think, and act, with the rest of the world around him.

Passion makes men credulous, and credulity has been the bane of many a new comer. When some promising bargain in stock, duly ushered forth in the daily papers, meets his eye, it must always be obvious to the reader who consults his reason, that the advertiser probably finds, owing to circumstances not mentioned in the catalogue, that the stock which he is offering for sale is not repaying him. The advantages set forth may very likely really exist, as far as they go, but are in all likelihood coun-

terbalanced by drawbacks which a stranger in the country will not have sufficient judgment to discover in time. Human nature is much the same everywhere, and greater candour cannot be reasonably expected from the Robinses of Sydney, than from him whose lively imagination has made him so famous at home.

The safest course, and indeed the only one likely to lead to good results, is to wait with patience. Let the newly-arrived capitalist give up all intention of purchasing stock for at least two years, during which time he should go into the interior and reside upon some large grazing establishment, where he may have facilities for learning the necessary routine of "bush life." By this mode of proceeding he will gain a twofold advantage: should the sort of life really not suit him, he will be able to withdraw in time; but if, on the other hand, he should wish, after his trial, to carry out his first intentions, he ought, after two years' experience, to have gained sufficient knowledge of the intrinsic value of colonial property to enable him to invest his capital with the prospect of a fair return. By this previous residence at a station he will acquire the necessary knowledge of the sort of business. A capital of experience is as indispensable to a settler as a capital of money: a stock establishment in the hands of a novice is little better than a spirited horse in the possession of a bad rider—it will only give him a fall.

Nor let it be supposed that time is lost by thus waiting to gain experience. Surely it is better to remain stationary than to be drifted in the wrong direction. It is cheaper to buy experience by giving up for a time all hope of gain, than by incurring immediately a positive and heavy loss. The capitalist who has been able to exert this forbearance, will find himself, after a few years, considerably in advance of those who have pursued the usual course. Many who have lost their time and their capital in Australia would, if they had followed the plan here recommended, have been comparatively rich; they would not perhaps have equalled their first expectations, but they would at least have added something to their capital, instead of seeing it dwindle away through their own mismanagement.

At the commencement of the settler's career it is of the greatest consequence to fix at once upon a part of the colony where the pasture is most favourable to the sort of stock which it is intended to put upon it, since inferior stock in a good coun-

try will be always found more profitable than that of a far better description if kept upon an indifferent station. Soil and pasture vary so much within a short distance of each other in Australia, both in quantity and quality, that he who purchases a station on the faith of having received a good account of the one adjacent to it, often finds to his cost that its capabilities for pastoral purposes are totally different and very inferior. Some "runs" lie too low for sheep, others too high for horned cattle; some are too much exposed, and some again are too heavily timbered and covered with "scrub," while many a station which appears highly desirable if seen after wet weather, loses almost its whole supply of water in a dry season. Sometimes a tract of country appears, to an unpractised eye, to be all that could be desired, abounding in grass, water, and "open forest" for shelter; but after having fixed upon it, and incurred the trouble and expense of getting up an establishment, the new comer finds his mistake too late; the pasture is "sour," and no live stock will thrive upon it. Horses and horned cattle, being unconfined, will roam away in search of more congenial spots, and though the sheep, being folded at night, cannot stray off, yet they soon indicate by their condition that the grass is unsuitable to them; abundant as it is, they eat little of it, and that little appears to afford them no nourishment, and thus they starve in the midst of plenty.

Even the facilities for taking the stock to a good market have often been overlooked by new comers, through their haste to commence business; and they have subsequently discovered that, having misjudged their distance, the expenses of getting the saleable stock to the capital deduct so much from its value as to take away nearly all the profit.

A really good station, having every requisite, viz. size, pasture of good quality, water, and vicinity to an advantageous market, is very valuable throughout the colony, and consequently is much sought after, and difficult to be obtained.

Theoretical calculations of the interest derivable from money invested in pastoral pursuits in Australia can seldom be depended on, the result of experience on this point having usually been that they are more apt to mislead than to benefit the young colonist, and he who trusts to them usually lives to see their fallacy. The fact is, that the colonial markets are so variable, and the annual expenses of a station so much influenced, not

only by good and bad management, but by other circumstances which cannot be controlled, that even a man of long experience is often greatly deceived in his judgment; that of a new comer to the colony must therefore be very fallible, being usually derived partly from the advice of interested individuals, partly from the small talk of the capital, or vague notions previously gathered at home.

In making a purchase, the stranger will do well to bear in mind that the nice sense of honour which, in the mother country, he has probably been accustomed to expect, must not be relied on too confidently at the antipodes. It is true that he will meet with many men in Australia possessed of as high notions of honour as are to be found in any part of the world; but it naturally happens in this colony, as in most new countries, that the insatiate thirst for wealth, as well as the great mixture of society, tends, in a considerable degree, to blunt the fine edge of principle.

It is to be hoped, and it is the general opinion, that the commercial and pastoral prosperity of Australia, though it received a severe shock, now stands on firmer ground than it has ever done before, and it is very improbable that the settler will ever again be harassed by such a fearful fluctuation of prices as has occurred within the last eight years; but that the young colonist may know what he has escaped, I may mention that during my residence in Australia merino ewes have been worth two guineas each, and they have also been sold for a shilling! Mixed cattle fell in price from five pounds to twelve shillings per head, and a brood mare, which in 1839 would have fetched sixty guineas, could be bought a year or two afterwards for fourteen pounds. These changes are never likely to occur again, as the actual value of each kind of stock is now more generally ascertained.

Once more I may warn the capitalist that he will do well to dismiss from his mind the idea of making a fortune by pastoral pursuits. If he now emigrates, he must do so with the intention of making a long residence in the country, or of adopting it as his permanent home, and must not look upon it as a place from which he is constantly struggling to get free. Many continue to cherish this wish to escape, and thus fail in deriving from

their situation the advantages it really holds out. Thus they struggle on, discontented and repining; and having begun by expecting too much from Australia as a land of promise, they end by blaming it unfairly (to use their own expression) as a land of little performance.

The best settler, and certainly the happiest man, is he who, having few ties in the mother country, can actually, and not nominally, adopt a new one. They who, in mind at least and in feeling, remain strangers and sojourners in the land, are the most sensibly touched by the reverses of fortune, and by the many disappointments, which must necessarily occur to lessen their chance of deliverance from what to them is thralldom, and of return to enjoy again the refinements, and share in the sympathies, which an old country can alone afford.

On the other hand, what lot is more enviable than his who, cherishing for the land of his birth an affectionate regard, unmingled with painful regrets, sees in the land of his adoption the scene of his honourable exertions, and of his future usefulness, a new home, gained by his own industry, where his family are growing up around him in health and independence?

Let us further suppose that such a man employs the whole weight of his character, of his wealth, and his newly-acquired influence, in promoting to the utmost the spread of morality and religious instruction, and thus purifying at its source the fountain of public prosperity. Such men there are, and many more who need but a little increase of zeal to become altogether such. What a noble opportunity is thus offered to the colonist of serving the best interests of the land of his birth, and of showing his gratitude to the land of his adoption! Not a little, let us acknowledge with thankfulness, has been done to correct the evils inseparable from the organization of an infant colony, but more remains to do, and in such a cause the most forward can never do too much.

THE END.

WESTERN BARBARY:

ITS

WILD TRIBES AND SAVAGE ANIMALS.

BY

JOHN H. DRUMMOND HAY, Esq.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1844.

INTRODUCTION.

THE journey which forms the groundwork of this small volume was undertaken for the purpose of procuring for Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, a barb of the purest blood from some of the breeders of horses in the region around Laraiche.

The Author, as the reader will perceive, was not so fortunate as to succeed in this object; but during the course of his expedition, short as it was, he saw such striking pictures of Arab life, and heard so many anecdotes illustrative of the peculiarities of character, customs, and manners in the various tribes, that he was tempted to commit them to writing.

Western Barbary possesses many points of interest, and has of late years been little explored by Europeans; but the Author has no intention, on the present occasion at least, to enter into any geographical or statistical details: his object in the following pages being merely to portray the character and manners of the wild tribes which inhabit this fertile but neglected country; and he has attempted to do this, not only by giving his own description of men and things, but by recording the wild and fanciful stories which were related to him by the Arab companions of his journey.

A residence of many years at Tangier, at which place his father is her Majesty's Consul-general, enabled the Author to become perfectly familiar with the Mogrebbin dialect of the Arabic; and he passed many weeks with the rude sportsmen of the country in their hunting expeditions into the interior. During these excursions he lived as they did, and became for the time one of their wild troop; and he thus acquired a considerable insight into their peculiarities of character.

The reader may perhaps be startled at the style, and the apparent admixture of fiction, in some of the stories given in this volume: but the Author can vouch for his having recorded with perfect accuracy and truth what was narrated to him. It would have been utterly impossible for him to have given a just idea of the feelings and tone of mind of the Moors, unless he had retained their romantic and exaggerated expressions; more especially as with them the most common occurrences of life are coloured with the highest tints of fancy, and every event is attributed to the direct interference either of the Supreme Being or of some tributary spirit.

In the habit also, which is universal amongst them, of relating long conversations with lions, boars, and hyænas, a Moorish sportsman scarcely considers that he is dealing in fiction; for, with him, every variety of sound which a wild animal utters is translatable into good Arabic.

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WESTERN BARBARY.

CHAPTER I.

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“PRAYER is better than sleep! God is great!” — These words, chanted by the hoarse voice of the Mueddin * from a neighbouring mosque, had just roused me from my dreams, when our old guard, Kaid E'Soosy, entered my room, and, as he lighted my lamp, exclaimed, “Have you not a long day's journey before you, and are you still in bed?”

I was soon dressed, and quickly completed my preparations for a start.

It was on the morning of the 15th of August, 1839, as the first rays of light shot over Gibel Moossa,† the African Pillar of Hercules, that our little party set forth from Tangier, “the city protected of the Lord,” on a visit to the wise Fakee,‡ the mighty Basha Abd E'Slam E'Slowy, then residing at Laraiche.

As we passed through the *Sok Srare* (the little market-place), groups of tall Reefians,§ enveloped in their white haiks or hooded gelab, the long mountain-dagger slung by their side, their heads

* The priest who announces the hour of prayer from the minaret.

† Ape's Hill.

‡ A learned man.

§ The inhabitants of the line of mountains between Ceuta and Oran.

bare and closely shaved, with the exception of a long lock hanging wildly on their shoulders, were resting on their *Agarzeen*, or Moorish hoes, waiting for hire; whilst every now and then there passed by with measured steps a Taleb (Moorish scribe), returning from his matins in the great mosque, the living image of those "who enlarged the borders of their garments, and loved greetings in the market-place."*

We passed the Upper Fountain, where black slaves were screaming and squabbling as to who should first fill their antique-looking jars; whilst the Jew, the slave of slaves, waited humbly until his acknowledged superiors of Islam were satisfied.

As we reached the gates of the town, old Hamed Ben Khajjo, the porter, made his appearance. In one hand he carried a ponderous bunch of ancient-looking keys; in the other a rosary, which he continued to finger, muttering away, as he counted his beads, some of the ninety-nine epithets of the Deity—"O Giver of Good to all! O Creator!" And then another bead; and then a curse on the great-great-grandfathers of the crowd, who pressed upon him. The heavy half-rotten gates, covered in part with camel-skin, much of which had been devoutly cut off for charms or medicinal purposes, swung back groaning on their hinges, and we passed out.

Between the first and second barrier there is an open space occupied by the forges and shops of smiths, and on the left a nook, where formerly the bluff soldiers of our Charles II.† kept their main-guard, but where now snored the lazy Moorish sentinel, and some four or five long guns hung suspended in their dusty covers.

The second gates were now thrown open, a long bolt being their only fastening, the lock having been for years out of repair. Nevertheless the old porter thought it expedient to go through some form with a rusty key in the presence of "the Nazarene, the rebeller against God and enemy of the Faithful."

"A safe journey to you, O son of the English!" said Hamed: "Where are you going?"

"*Eeftah Allah*" (God will show), I answered, as my horse

* Matthew xxiii. 5-7.

† Tangier was possessed by the English in 1662, and was given up in 1684. It was received as part of the dowry of the Infant of Portugal.

bounded through the gate, and we found ourselves in the outer market and fairly started on our journey.

A long train of camels, driven by a half-naked Arab, were moving up the market-hill; a simple *Keiton*, or travelling-tent, was pitched near Seedy Mekhfee's sanctuary, the patron saint of the market-place, where a grey-bearded Arab was prostrating himself at his morning prayers: half a dozen donkeys completed the scene.

Ascending the hill, we passed through the Mohamedan burial-ground. Simple mounds of earth were crowded on either side of our path, all so placed as to point to the Prophet's tomb at Mecca. Most of them had a small board at the head; but those of the wealthier class were surrounded by a low and whitened wall; whilst here and there was seen an ancient tombstone, carved in arabesque, a monument of their formidable ancestors. Low palmetto bushes, some wild vines, creeping over a few solitary and blighted fig-trees, form the scanty ornaments of the Tangier cemetery.

Carefully I avoided treading on the graves, for it is said the souls of the Faithful are troubled when an infidel trespasses on their place of rest. Here it is that on Friday, the Mohamedan sabbath, the dark-eyed Houris of Tangier are seen, enveloped in their white haiks, and flitting like shrouded ghosts about the tombs. Wailing and lamentation are heard on every side; and the young widow may be often seen scattering myrtle on the grave of her husband, while, bending over it, she calls to him who can no longer hear:—"Oh! why have you deserted me? Have I been wanting in my duties to you, that I deserved so hard a fate? Woe, woe is me; I am left alone and wretched! why was not I freed with thee from the troubles of this life?" In other spots you see mothers bewailing the loss of their children, beating their breasts and sobbing aloud. Then come upon your ear the solemn chant and hurried footsteps of some funeral procession. The simple rites of the dead are performed in haste. Azrael, the angel of death, is supposed to be hovering over the fresh-dug grave, and any delay would be an infringement of the law of the Prophet.

We now reached the broad road of the Ambassadors, so called from being that by which all persons returning from missions to

the Sultan enter the town ; being the widest, and therefore most fit to receive the troops that may be sent to discharge their coarse powder in the faces of those on whom they are ordered to confer this great honour. On either side the road are vineyards and gardens, the hedges of which are variously formed of prickly pear, of the elegant cane, and formidable aloë, whose stately stems, covered with clusters of yellow flowers, compensate in some degree, at this season, for the want of trees in the scenery of this country. As we passed the *Kooba*, or alcoved tomb of Seedy Mohamed Al Hadj, the patron saint of Tangier, my soldier Mallem Ahmed muttered a fervent prayer, promising the sacrifice of a kid, should we have a safe return.

We soon traversed the few enclosures that surround the town, and then an extensive tract of open country lay before us. Hill after hill of half-cultivated land rose in succession, overtopped in the east by the heights of Anjèra ; and to the south and west the lofty mountain of Gibel Habeeb, the ranges of Beni Hoosma and Beni Hassen, which are the north-western feet of mighty Atlas, reared their lofty heads, which, now gilded by the rising sun, formed a grand framework for the landscape.

The morning was delightful ; and a pleasant breeze, blowing from the south-west, the direction in which we were travelling, made the air cool, notwithstanding the burning rays of an African sun.

The village of Swany, the first we passed, and distant about a mile and a half from Tangier, is composed of sixty or seventy huts of sun-dried bricks, thatched with straw or reeds, on many of which stands within her nest the sainted stork, in full confidence, although raised but a few feet above a rabble rout of noisy children. Numerous cattle were grazing around on the sunburnt grass, whilst their herdsman, a wretched being in a tattered garb, soothed their sorry meal by a plaintive tune on his rude pipe, made of the country cane.

Here we were joined by my friend Hadj Abdallah, sheikh of the village, who had engaged to accompany me in my expedition, being a good judge of horses, and a man upon whom I could depend—a rarity in Marocco.

But before proceeding with my narrative, it is right that I should describe our little party. First comes our soldier, Mallem

Ahmed, the sole escort, who was mounted on a stout chesnut horse, and dressed in the flowing haik, over which was his soolham of blue cloth; the tall red Moorish cap, with many folds of muslin gracefully twisted round it, formed his turban; and a pair of dandily worked yellow boots, with a terrific-looking pair of spurs, completed his dress. He had a good expression of countenance; his complexion was that of the south of Spain, with a scanty black beard, of which he took great care.

My friend the Hadj was mounted on a bat horse that carried our little tent. The Hadj is about six feet two inches, a fine specimen of the thorough-bred Reefian; he wore a black gelab,* with a large turban, and the long Reefian knife was stuck in his girdle. A fierceness of features, blended with much kindliness of expression, formed the character of a countenance that is not uncommon among these highlanders. He was full of anecdote, and inconceivably fond of talking.

Then comes Sharky, my Jack-of-all-trades, my servant, my cook, my groom, my huntsman, my second soldier, but my prime minister in all my proceedings with the Moors. He was mounted on a monster of a mule, who carried the rest of our baggage, consisting of the carpet-bags, a mat and carpet, a few bottles of wine, and other small matters necessary for a Christian, and not to be got for love or money in an Arab *dooar*, or encampment. A Spanish friend yclept Don José M. Escazena,† and *Jan*, as the Moors call me, brought up the rear.

Our road, or rather track, *treck*, as the Arabs say, was good at this season of the year, though occasionally we gave our nags their heads to pick the way over deep cracked soil, which yawned for moisture. Undulating hills of a rich dark soil, patched here and there with yellow stubble, or the green crops of maize and dra, surrounded us on every side; and the deep gullies that lay across our route, down which run torrents of water in the rainy season, were now dry beds of rock and gravel.

* A coarse woollen dress worn by the lower orders, and similar in form to the cowl of monks. The early Christians probably adopted this fashion from the people of the East, among whom also it is found.

† Don José M. Escazena, who, by the by, approved himself the best possible of travelling companions, is an accomplished artist. In the course of our route he filled his portfolio with a series of very interesting sketches, the whole of which he kindly presented to me. Don José is now resident at Gibraltar.

We soon ascended the hill of *Bāhārein*, or the Two Seas, so called from the Mediterranean and Atlantic being both seen from its summit. Some hundred yards to our right was a large village bearing the same name. Several smaller villages are situated in its neighbourhood, the huts of which, like all which I saw in this district, have each a small garden or orchard, enclosed with a hedge of prickly pears, giving them a picturesque appearance and almost an air of comfort.

"May God assist you, Hadj Amar!" I said, addressing myself to a fine-looking Saracen, who advanced towards our party with a large bowl of milk, the emblem of peace: "and how fares your dog Dooah? When again shall we have a run with him after the boar in the plains of Sheref al Akaab?"

At the sound of his name, a large hound, somewhat resembling our British greyhound, though stronger built, bounded forward, leaping up to my horse.

"He will never forget you," said his master, "O son of the English, after that last run in the Shreewa. What a thunderbolt of a boar that was! Nothing but the book of fate saved my dog. But drink this milk—it will do you good."

"*Bismillah*" (in the name of God), I said, and put the bowl to my lips, and then handed it to our party.

"God will repay you!" cried they, as we rode on.

"A path of peace to you," replied Hadj Amar; "and let us have some days of hunting when you return."

We had passed the village about two miles, the Mallem was singing some ancient Mauro-Spanish ballad of love and wine, and I was conversing with my Christian friend on the mixture of good and evil in the character of the Moors—when "*Salamoo aleekoom*" (peace be with you) was uttered in the rear by some strange voice. We turned round to look at the speaker. He was a venerable-looking Arab, well mounted on an iron-grey rat-tailed barb; on the bow of his high-peaked saddle rested the long Moorish gun; and in his right hand he carried a small stick, upon which were inscribed some Arabic characters. This I recognised as one of the holy batons given by sainted persons to those who are about to undertake a journey, as a protection on the road from robbers and from mishaps of all sorts. A simple haik was his only covering; his legs and sinewy arms were bare,

and his slippered feet were armed with the Moorish spurs, which are merely silvered spikes of iron about a foot long, with a circle of metal at the hilt to prevent more than the point penetrating: but even with this precaution I have heard of a bad rider giving a death-wound to his steed.

“Whither, my friend, are you journeying?” said I to him: “I trust it be our way, since you have received that highly gifted blessing from some holy man, whose days, as well as yours, may God prolong!—and ours too, if you please!”

“Ah! Nazarene,” said the owner of the rat-tailed, “you speak the Arabic! There is no knowing what you Christians have not learnt—God’s will be done!—but this is your paradise: ours is to come. I am on my road to the tribe of Oolad Ensair (the Sons of the Eagle), whose tents are pitched some two days’ journey south of Laraiche. As to this baton,” he added, kissing it reverently as he spoke, “it was given me many years past by the father of the shereef Mulai Alee Bengeloon, the saint of Alcassar—on whom be peace! Nay, in truth, I have ever journeyed free from harm, even when Alee Boofrahee, the six-fingered—God preserve us from such another!—infested these regions. Christian, you have heard of Alee Boofrahee? Truly he was the wonder and terror of the world. But, poor fellow, what a dreadful death he suffered! May God have mercy on his soul!”

“Alee Boofrahee,” said I, “the famous robber? They tell me miraculous stories of him.”

“Allah!” exclaimed the stranger: “You would not believe me—May a ball pass through your heart, and a curse on your great-grandfather, for stumbling, you brute!” he exclaimed, addressing the rat-tailed—“You would not believe me, Christian, should I relate all his adventures.”

“In truth,” said I, “if you will slacken the pace of your horse, which seems to be a rare stepper, I should wish for nothing better than such a tale told by such a companion as you.”

The Arab took me at my word, and accepting my compliment with a gracious bow, thus abruptly commenced his tale of the robber:—

“In the name of the most merciful God!—Know then, Nazarene, that some twenty years ago, when Moolai Soleeman was

shaded by the imperial umbrella, there resided in the village of Bendeeban, which is situated on the way to Fas, about four miles south of Tangier, the father of our hero, Mohamed Boofrahee by name. Alee was his only son, his mother having gone to her Creator on the day of his birth, and Mohamed had vowed never to wed again.

“ Mohamed Boofrahee, like the rest of his neighbours, was a poor farmer possessing two or three patches of land and a small vineyard. He was also a sportsman and a good shot. His young son Alee was never so happy as when accompanying his father on a shooting excursion, and he was always the first to see the game; for his father being now passed threescore, his sight had grown dim. An idle fellow was Alee in other respects; for though Mohamed sent him every morning to the village school to be instructed by Taleb Moostafa in the Koran, he was never able to repeat ten verses together of that holy book: but in running, playing at foot-ball, wrestling, or firing at a mark, no young man in the village could compete with the six-fingered.

“ I remember,” continued the rider of the rat-tailed, “ on the marriage of Sheikh Mohamed Biteewy, of the village of Boamar, I was invited with my brethren, who were encamped in the plains of Sheref al Akaab, to attend the marriage-feast; and a merry-making, I can assure you, we had. God’s bounty was seen in those days. There were dishes of Kesksou* set before us which seven men could hardly lift; and the slave of the sheikh, the long-armed Embàrek, bared himself to the shoulder and dived into the deep dishes for the fat mutton, the goodly capons, and the other dainty bits. Water-melons, grapes, and other fruits were piled before us to sharpen appetite: drums and pipes sounded from daybreak to sunset, whilst the graceful Absalam enchanted the eyes of all, whilst they gazed on his gazelle-formed limbs, as he kept time in the dance to the guitar of Ben Dawwed.

“ *Lab el Barode* (powder-play) commenced. Our tribe mustered about two hundred horse; we charged in line: some stood on their heads at full speed; others changed horses with their

* The national dish of the Moors. It is made of the fine part of wheaten flour, and is dressed in a similar manner to Turkish pilaph—only steamed, instead of boiled.

companions at full gallop : then reining in, as we dashed within a gun's length of the sheikh, we fired our muskets, wheeled round, and gave place to others who charged close in our rear."

Here my new acquaintance, excited by the recital of the exploits of his tribe, suddenly broke off his story, and dashing his spurs into the flank of his barb, burst away at full speed, shouting "Allah! Allah!" His turban fell off—not accidentally, I am inclined to think—and the haik, loosed from his shoulders in the breeze, was poised in the air for a moment, and fell to the ground. He then fired, threw the rat-tailed on his haunches, and, wheeling round, came back at full gallop. As he approached us, he recovered his haik with the muzzle of his gun, and then throwing himself on one side, stretched his long arm, and, while yet in full course, whisked up his turban from the ground. In another moment he was by my side, replaced his head-gear with the greatest gravity, and continued his narrative as coolly as if he had merely paused to take a pinch of snuff.

"The powder-play," said he, "being finished, we fired at a mark. Seedy Tayeb Boocassem of Wazan, whom God had blessed with an unerring eye—the prince of marksmen—chanced to be present. To him we referred to judge who amongst us was the best shot. A pile of stones, with a small pebble or a flower at the top, was our target. Many good shots had been made, but the beardless Alee put us all to shame; seldom did he miss the flower, and Boocassem declared him to be the victor. When the firing ceased, Boocassem offered up a prayer to the Lord of all creatures for the welfare of the whole party.

"Seedy Boocassem,' said the sheikh, 'there is one shot yet to be fired, and that too by the finest marksman amongst us: so get ready your gun. And here,' continued the sheikh, holding out an egg, 'who is there that will put this egg between his ankles, and stand by yonder aloe for Seedy Tayeb Boocassem to break it?'

"There was a dead silence—no one moved from his place but young Alee. The boy ran forward, kissed the hand of Sheikh Mohamed Biteewy, and soon placed himself at the aloe with the egg between his ankles.

"In the name of God,' said Boocassem, as he poured in the powder, and rammed down the wadding of palmetto rind;

and 'God be propitious,' said he, as the ball rolled down. The cock of the gun was pulled back, the priming was poured into the pan, and Boocassem, squatting on the ground, levelled his gun.

" 'Am I properly placed?' said Alee.

" 'Bring up the left leg more;' said Boocassem: 'that will do.'

" The long gun seemed as steady as if it had rested on a rock: every man held his breath. Bang went the gun, and Alee's ankles were besmeared with the yolk of the egg.

" 'Thank God!' said Boocassem; and we shouted one and all.

" Young Alee came forward, and Seedy Tayeb Boocassem laid his hands on him and blessed him, prophesying that at some future time he also would be able to perform the feat of breaking the egg. 'But beware, boy,' said he, 'attempting it until you arrive at such perfection as never to miss your mark; for I remember, some years ago, when I was at the holy city of Wazàn during the feast of the lamb, Bengeloon and other marksmen of fame from distant parts had assembled to shoot at the target. Bengeloon and I were the only two who had fired at the egg. Then Kaid Absalam, he who had been governor of Alcassar, whose heart was black with envy, swore by the beard of our Prophet that he could do what others had done before him: so he called one of his slaves, and told him to take his place with the egg, about thirty paces from where he was sitting:—it was the same distance at which we had fired.

" 'The gun was levelled, and Bengeloon—may God profit us through him!—looking over the kaid's shoulder, exclaimed, 'Allah! unless you keep your gun steadier, O kaid, you will hit his left leg.' Bang went the gun, and the slave fell with a groan, for the ball had passed through his left ankle.

" 'There go a hundred dollars,' said Kaid Absalam; 'but the next shot shall hit the egg. Abd-el-Habeeb,' said he, calling on another of his slaves, 'take another egg, and stand where Embarek stood. Coward! what do you tremble for? Stand steady, or I will put a ball through your heart.'

" Again the gun was levelled.

" 'All wrong,' said Bengeloon, who remained at his shoulder. Bang it went, and the ball passed through the fleshy part of the leg, but the slave kept his position.

“ ‘That is a fine fellow,’ said Bengeloon to the kaid, who was again loading his gun: ‘Be merciful, as you expect mercy in the world to come.’

“ ‘True,’ said the kaid, ‘but I must have another shot, for all that.’ He fired for the third time, and broke the egg!”

“Well, Christian, as soon as Seedy Tayeb Boocassem finished his story, wrestling and playing at sword-stick commenced:—Alee threw and overcame every antagonist; and the marriage feast ended merrily.

“Days and months rolled on, and Alee was idle, and would not work with his father. The grape season came, and it was found that the vineyards of Bendeegan had been plundered; but the robber could not be discovered: although a sharp look-out was kept constantly from the tall aloë-stalk watch-stands both night and day, the thief eluded all their vigilance.

“One morning Mohamed Boofrahee, Alee’s father, having gone into his own vineyard, observed a quantity of the fruit to be missing. Mohamed, who, as I have already told you, was a sportsman, and accustomed to track his game, searched for the footsteps of the plunderer; but the ground was hard and dry—no traces could be found, and he was giving up all search as useless, when on one spot a well known footmark caught his eye. ‘Holy Prophet!’ exclaimed Mohamed, as he counted the marks of the toes, one, two, three, four, five, six; ‘have I not forbidden Alee to enter the vineyard? Ah! it is he who has robbed the vineyard of my neighbours as well as his father’s. This comes of idleness.’

“Mohamed returned home sorrowful; Alee was an only son, and he was proud of him.

“ ‘Alee,’ said his father, as they sat alone that night, ‘you have been in the vineyard.’ Alee did not answer. ‘Alee,’ repeated his father, ‘you had my orders never to enter that place. I have now discovered who is the plunderer of Bendeegan’s vines. But justice shall be done, and to-morrow I shall give you over to the sheikh to receive due punishment. Your idle disposition has long been a cause of distress to me—a good bastinado may help to cure you.’

“Mohamed parted with Alee that night in anger. The morning dawned; Mohamed was doatingly fond of his son; he had

changed his mind, and thought it better to hush up the matter, but he resolved to give him some good advice as to his future conduct. So he called out loudly for him, but Aleé was not to be found. That day passed and the next; and weeks, and months, and years elapsed, yet still his son was missing.

“Some six years after, there was a great feast in the city of Marocco; the sultan’s favourite wife, Lâlâ Fâtima, had been brought to bed of a son, and an imperial order was given that there should be three days of rejoicing; and a countless throng of Arabs and Berbers flocked into the city. It was on the second morning of this feast, and a great crowd had collected to gaze at some mountebanks, who abound on such occasions. Some people were standing, some few behind the rest were on horseback, but the far greater part were squatted on their hams. It was in the vast market-place of Marocco, not far from the stately tower of the great mosque,* the Kootsabéea which stands towering above the countless minarets, and whence the unity of God and Mohamed’s mission are daily proclaimed.

“There were snake-charmers from the desert, jugglers from Soos, and story-tellers in abundance; but what most attracted attention was a tall athletic black from the Bokhàry body-guard of the sultan, who had challenged six men to cudgel-play, all the six at once; and was now brandishing a long staff against that number of antagonists, all armed with the like weapon and all active players. But the black, by his superior vigour and wonderful dexterity, evaded all their onsets, dealing every now and then, as a momentary occasion offered, a blow that came like a flash of lightning on each opponent.

“Each man, when he received a hit from the swarthy athlete, retired from the ring—the rule being such. The black had already disposed of three, and by keeping constantly on the move, and giving every now and then the spring of an antelope, he remained himself untouched. The three unhit fencers were men of skill and power, and now with united assaults they pressed hard upon him, but he found victory in pretended flight; for thus separated, the three became, each in his turn, easy victims to his unequalled prowess.

* Like in construction to that of the Girelda of the Cathedral at Seville, and built by the same famous Geber.

“Flushed with success, the Bokhàry conqueror bared his brawny arm, and now shouted a challenge, that was heard from Bab-el-khamees to Bab-el-khadar,* against all comers; daring any man to receive and give one blow with the fist.

“This same challenge had been repeatedly made on former feasts, and few had ever accepted it with impunity; for a broken rib or some other serious injury always attended a blow from the champion, who was a perfect tower of strength, and the chief of the Blow-givers.†

“A broad-shouldered, athletic-looking fellow, in the garb of a mountaineer, stepped forward and accepted the challenge, on condition that, ‘if God gave him the victory,’ security should be assured him from the resentment of the Bokhàry’s comrades.

“That the challenge of the chief Blow-giver had been accepted, reached the ears of the sultan, who sent for the mountaineer, and asked him whether it were true that he dared to engage in combat the mighty Shasha, who dealt in blows of death.

“‘May God prolong the life of our master!’ said the mountaineer, throwing himself at the feet of the descendant of the Prophet: ‘Yes, my lord, I have accepted the challenge of the kaid‡ of the Blow-givers, on condition that I be secured from the vengeance of the Bokhàry, should God grant me success.’

“‘You are a sturdy looking fellow,’ said the sultan: ‘where do you come from, and what is your name?’

“‘Alee Boofrahee,’ replied the man, for he it was; and throwing himself prostrate, he told his tale, but said nothing about Bendeeban’s vineyard.

“He had employed himself, it appeared, as courier and muleteer since his flight from his father’s house, and had led a roving life, having travelled throughout the whole empire.

“‘Let him be lodged in the palace,’ said the sultan to his at-

* Two opposite gates of the city of Marocco.

† Among the household soldiery of the Moorish sultan, there are certain men charged with particular services, which they alone can perform. Their titles are—mwal-el-asà, the blow-giver; mwal-ayfel, the scourgers; mwal-sekkeen, the swordsmen; mwal-mkahel, the shooters; mwal-emzergeen, the spearmen. These officers are alone authorized to strike, scourge, cut, shoot, or spear, the sultan’s faithful and loving subjects, as the fancy of their imperial master may dictate when he appears amongst them.

‡ The chief.

tendants: 'to-morrow, if it please the most high God, the blows shall be given in our Shereefian* presence.'

"The guards fell prostrate, their heads touching the ground, crying out as they did so, 'May God prolong the life of our master!' Then they led off Alee, who that night had his heart's content of kesksoo."

* Of Prophetic origin.

CHAPTER II.

Journey continued—Thrashing Corn—Relic of Idolatry—Ain Dàlla—Cross the Mhaha—Advice of the owner of the filly—Arab's love for his horse—Dar-al-Clow—Bagging a Jackal—Boar-hunt—Death of a Hound—Funeral Mound.

I INTERRUPTED our new acquaintance in his story, to point out to my Spanish friend some Moors thrashing corn. Mares with their colts tied abreast by the head or neck are used for this work. One man stands in the middle holding the reins, whilst another shouts and applies the whip or goad when necessary. Mules and donkeys are employed in bringing the sheaves.

The country folk are dressed in light woollen shirts, their arms and legs bare; a red cap or small turban covers the head; their shoes are religiously left at the margin of the thrashing-floor, it being regarded as holy ground by all the children of the East. I remarked that they carefully avoid making any calculation of the produce of their harvest, and are offended if you question them as to their expectations, checking you by the grave reply—"As God may please."

There is a curious custom which seems to be a relic of their pagan masters, who made this and the adjoining regions of North Africa the main granary of their Latin empire. When the young corn has sprung up, which it does about the middle of February, the women of the villages make up the figure of a female, the size of a very large doll, which they dress in the gaudiest fashion they can contrive, covering it with ornaments to which all in the village contribute something; and they give it a tall peaked head-dress. This image they carry in procession round their fields, screaming and singing a peculiar ditty. The doll is borne by the foremost woman, who must yield it to any one who is quick enough to take the lead of her; which is the cause of much racing and squabbling. The men also have a similar

custom, which they perform on horseback. They call the image *Mata*.

These ceremonies are said by the people to bring good luck. Their efficacy ought to be great, for you frequently see crowds of men engaged in their performance, running and galloping recklessly over the young crops of wheat and barley.

Such customs are directly opposed to the faith of Islam, and I never met with a Moor who could in any way enlighten me as to their origin.

The Berber tribes, the most ancient race now remaining in these regions, to which they gave the name, are the only ones which retain this antique usage, and it is viewed by the Arabs and dwellers in the town as a remnant of idolatry.

We now passed by *Ain Dàlla*, the Fountain of the Vine, so called from this spot having been famous in days of yore for its grapes, but, like everything else in this country, it has gone to ruin, and not a vestige remains of ancient industry, except a few wild vines climbing over stunted fig-trees.

An Arab *dooar*, or encampment, is perched on the summit of the hill, composed of tents made of the palmetto fibre, and a few huts erected by those who, finding a rich pasturage and favourable soil, have here fixed their permanent abode.

After descending the hill we passed over a rich plain, and crossed the shallow bed of the river *Mhàhà*, the banks of which, all red with the flowers of the oleander, appeared at a distance like a stream of fire.

Having passed the river, we found ourselves in a sandy region, whence the country around takes the name of *Kāā Ermel*, or the plain of sand: it is, however, well irrigated by the winter rains, and thick stubbles of wheat and barley recently cut showed its fertility.

The Hadj called my attention to a fine filly feeding with her dam among the stubble. We halted to examine her; she was a three-year old, and a vastly pretty creature, with a head, the best point of barbs, so small that she might truly have drunk from a quart-pot. But her fore and hind legs had been sadly disfigured by firing: this is done by the Arabs at an early age; and, instead of being considered a defect, as with us, is held rather to increase the value of the animal.

A young Arab, half naked, rising from the stubble like an apparition, showed that the mare was not unguarded. Thinking I might be induced to buy her, he began to tell her lineage, and gravely informed me that the only disadvantage that would arise to her rider was, that he would be deafened if ever he put her at full speed. "But," said he, gravely, "you can remedy that by always putting cotton in your ears."

It is not always that the Arab is ready to part with his horse, if a good beast, whatever price may be offered; though money amongst the degraded people of Marocco will work miracles. A circumstance which proved this occurred to me about four years ago, when accompanying poor John Davidson* some few days' journey into the interior.

As we were proceeding between Mehedeea and Rabàt we were joined by a troop of mounted Arabs, one of whom was riding a mottled grey, the handsomest barb I ever saw.

Riding up to the man, I entered into conversation with him, and, having put him in good humour by praising his steed, I told him I would make him rich if he would sell me the mottled grey.

"What is your price?" said the Arab.

I offered a hundred and fifty *mitsakel*, about twenty pounds sterling, a large sum in the interior.

"It is a good price," said the Arab; "but look," said he, and he brought his horse on the other side of me,—“look at this side of him,—you must offer more.”

"Well, come," I said, "you are a poor man, and fond of your horse; we won't dispute about the matter; so, give me your hand.†—What say you? two hundred?"

"That is a large price, truly," said the Arab, his eyes glistening, and I thought the horse was mine. But my eagerness, I suppose, had been too apparent, so the Arab thought I might go still further; and shaking the bridle, off he went at full speed. The mottled grey curled its tail in the air, and vanished to a speck in no time:—I turned to speak to Davidson, and the

* In the Appendix at the end of this volume will be found some particulars regarding this adventurous traveller, who met his death in 1836, in attempting to penetrate from Wadnoon to Timbuctoo.

† The Moorish manner of striking a bargain.

next moment the Arab was at my side ; and patting the neck of his grey, he said, "Look at him—see—not a hair is turned ! What will you give me now ?"

Davidson prompted me to offer even four hundred ducats rather than let the animal go. Again I began bargaining, and offered three hundred. On this the Arab gave his hand, and thanking me, said—"Christian, I now can boast of the price you have offered ; but it is in vain that you seek to tempt me, for I would not sell my horse for all the gold you, or any other man, possess." Having said this, he joined his companions.

Calling the kaid, or chief of our escort, I asked him if he knew the rider of the grey,—adding, that I supposed he must be rich, as he had refused so large a sum. The kaid said, "All I know is, that he is a great fool ; for he possesses nothing in the world but that horse, which he bought when a colt, selling his tent, flocks, and even his wife, to buy it."

I think that I have read a tale similar to this in Malcolm's 'Sketches of Persia ;' but what I have related occurred to myself, and precisely as I have described it.

Dar-el-Clow, a rugged sierra lying east and west, was now to be climbed, and we rode by a rocky path through a jungle of dwarf oak, cistus, white, rose, and yellow flowered laurestinus, arbutus, and myrtle. In our track lay the dead body of a camel. The animal, not formed by nature to climb such steepes, seemed to have broken its back. This happens, I understand, not unfrequently during the winter time, when the *kafflas*, the caravans of the West, attempt to travel during the rainy season. The poor creatures then become a prey to the jackals, packs of whom are ever on the watch for such disasters.

I remember a muleteer telling me he once had caught a couple of young jackals inside the carcass of a camel upon which he had come suddenly. Being surprised to hear a slight noise from within, he peered into the dead body, and there found *Taleb Yoosef* and his lady. So, taking off his gelab, he bagged them both.—The jackal, from his cunning, is called by the natives *Taleb Yoosef* (the scribe Joseph).

Strange to say, the Mohamedans of this country, though disgusted at the sight of pork, will feast upon the jackal as a delicacy.

This beast is not altogether carnivorous, for he eats with avidity the dates of the palmetto, and the berries of the arbutus and myrtle; and in this respect also resembles the fox, who, as is well known, is very fond of grapes when he can get them.

We were slowly winding up the hill, and I had just requested our new ally to resume his story of the Six-fingered, when we heard the well-known tongue of a boar-hound. "Hark!" said the Hadj—"Hark to old Zeitsoon!" I gave spurs to my horse, and was soon at the top of the hill, just in time to see a huge boar dash across the path, some fifty yards in front. Pell-mell at his heels came a motley pack of curs in full cry; and at a distance I heard the usual shouts of the beaters—"Get out, you Jew!" "At him, Zeitsoon!" "Hide yourself, Jawan!" "No other but the one God!"—and then many a long gun glistened through the bushes. I stood still until they came up, and soon recognised many old friends and fellow-hunters. They were half stripped, their legs well protected by palmetto buskins, formed exactly like the greaves of ancient Greece, with a leather apron to defend the body from the thorny thicket. Some with long guns, others with bill-hooks, to be used either to cut their way through the jungle, or, if need be, to defend themselves from the boar's onset, were following the dogs in ardent pursuit. A shot was heard upon our right, in the valley below, and in the direction that the boar had taken. They paused. By the note of the dogs they knew that the beast was at bay; so on dashed the whole hunt, shouting to their dogs to keep clear of the boar, and expressing their feelings in the most *endearing terms*. Such as "My children—My dearest—Take care, he sees you—He is an infidel, a Nazarene—He will have his revenge—None but the one God!"

The soldier with the baggage animals now joined me, and desiring him to go on to a well about a quarter of a mile off, where there was shade, and the Hadj and Sharky, both old hunters, also giving their animals to his care, we all rushed on into the thicket, and soon reached the spot where the shot had been fired: there we found a hale, though hoary hunter, who could not have weathered less than eighty winters, reloading his gun. He it was who had struck the boar.

The beast was at bay in a thicket of brambles, surrounded by

the dogs and hunters ; he showed great fight, but we soon dispatched him. He was a huge monster, and proved the truth of the poet's description—

“ On his bow back he hath a battel set
Of bristly pikes, that ever threat his foes :
His eyes like glow-worms shine when he doth fret,
His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes.
Being moved, he strikes whate'er be in his way ;
And whom he strikes, his crooked tushes slay.”

Three of the dogs were wounded—one of them fatally. The poor animal had just life enough to wag his tail and raise his head as his owner, a fine young mountaineer, came up, and took him in his lap.

“ Alas ! my poor dog,” he said ; “ did I not warn you not to go near the infidel ? But God's will be done.” The tears started in his eyes as his dog expired.

The bill-hooks were set to work, and a grave was dug to bury the poor animal ; each man put a stone upon it, as a tribute of his affectionate regret, and I, on my part, added one to the number.

The wounds of the other two dogs were now sewn up—the thorn or point of the aloe leaf and its fibres being substituted for a surgeon's needle and silk thread.

A fire was lit, and the boar put on to roast for their dogs, they having first offered me the lion's portion, whilst a little sly joking passed amongst them at my expense, such as—“ Let *Jan* have a larger portion than the other dogs.”

I did not accept their offer, for I had no one who would cook me the pork ; but I invited my friends to accompany me to the well, as the sun was now at its height, and scorching hot, promising them a supper of bread and fruit.

They readily accepted my invitation, and we toiled up the hill together, and re-entered the beaten track. Here and there mounds of stones marked the graves of unfortunate travellers, who on those spots had reached their goal of life. Their funeral monuments are raised by the pious hands of passers-by, according to the custom which has been in use from earliest times :—

“ Vagæ ne parce malignus arenæ
Ossibus et capiti inhumato
Particulam dare.”—HORACE, *Carm.* i. 28.

And this relic of ancient usage is still found to exist in many and far-distant countries.

Here I threw my stone again, and so did each of the hunters as they passed, muttering a prayer for the soul of the departed : but, for all that, among my troop perhaps might be the very man who had committed the deed of blood on some one of those whose obsequies we celebrated ; for my supper-party were as wild a set as could well have been collected together. Yet I felt safe among them, since I had often broken the bread of friendship, and shared with them in their toils and pleasures of the chase : in fact, they looked on me as a brother-sportsman ; and, I believe, would have laid down their lives, rather than a hair of my head should be injured.

CHAPTER III.

Lion-hunting—The Punishment of a good Shot—Story of the Battle between a Lion and a Boar—Affray with a Boar—My Story—The Melon Boar.

MALLEM HAMED had spread our carpets under the thick foliage of the *Kharrob*, or locust-tree ; and there the water-melons and grapes—which were placed before us—soon disappeared amongst the numerous party.

The sport of the day was discussed : and the old hunter who had wounded the boar told us that he had been in some danger ; for the beast rushed at him as he fired, and it would have gone hard with the veteran, if he had not sprung behind a tree.

“ In truth,” said the man, “ I am an old lion-hunter ; but I have found more danger in hunting the boar than in pursuit of the sultan of the forest ; since with the lion one is always more or less prepared for his attack.”

He went on to tell us that in the country of Reef, where he often hunted the lion, each man goes armed with a gun, a dagger, and three or four iron-tipped stakes. A hole about four feet in depth is dug, just wide enough for each man to crouch down in. The stakes are then driven into the ground with their iron points slightly inclined outwards ; each sportsman, as in boar-hunting, takes his station in these places of safety, which are dug in the tracks of the lion.

The beaters, making a great noise with drums, and shouting and firing of guns, drive the game towards the hunters : should they wound the lion, he generally springs at the man that fired, who immediately stoops, and the lion, falling on one of the stakes, is dispatched with their daggers.

“ You have,” said I, “ many lions in the region of *Akkalaya*. I suppose it is dangerous to be out after dark ?”

“ They rarely attack a man, if unprovoked,” replied the old Reefian : “ I have met them when alone ; they have stood and

looked at me. But in such cases a man must go on his way without appearing to notice the beast, and then he will almost always quietly walk away also."

"The best caution I can give," continued our grey-bearded guest, "in case you ever meet a lion, is, that you should keep on your own path with all the coolness you can command, until you observe that the *yellow-haired* * has passed out of view or has ceased watching you; then turn sharp to another direction, and pursue it rapidly, lest the lion, having noticed the line of your march, should proceed to meet you at a distance on that track, as they often do with all the cunning of a cat; and you may then have some difficulty in evading his wantonness or anger."

This advice somewhat reminded me of the story of the old peer, who, being asked what he had done on meeting a lion in the Strand, which had broken loose from Exeter Change,—replied with great composure—"Do? I called a coach." Nevertheless I treasured up the advice against a future emergency.

To my question, whether it was not very dangerous to hunt lions without the precaution of the pit and stakes, our guest replied, "Yes, Christian, it is: you carry your life in your open hand."

"I remember," continued he, "a son of the sheikh of our village returned home one evening trailing along the skin of a huge lion, which he laid at the feet of his father, and showing the hole where the ball had penetrated the skull, he told the sheikh that he had, alone, met the animal face to face in the wood, and killed him.

" 'My son,' said the sheikh, 'with which finger did you pull the trigger?'

"The young man held his forefinger up.

" 'Seize and bind him,' said the sheikh, and drawing his knife said, 'I cut off that finger, my beloved, that you may remember for the future, never to attack a lion when you are alone; for I would not lose you, my son, for a thousand, no, nor for ten thousand lion-skins.'

"In vain we all cried out to the sheikh to spare the youth,

* An Arabic expression, signifying a Lion.

who stood calmly obedient: but though the big tears rolled down the father's rugged cheeks, the finger was cut off."

"Do they destroy many of your cattle?" I asked.

"Now and then a sheep," said the old Reefian, "and sometimes a heifer if found alone; but though during the summer we turn our cattle into the woods, we seldom lose any. At night, to guard against the lion, the cattle, of their own instinct, form a circle, in the centre of which remain the heifers and cows, and outside of these the bullocks, the bulls placing themselves as sentries round the fold. If any bull hear or wind a lion, he makes a lowing noise and paws with his feet; the other bulls know the signal, and, forming themselves in line, dash at full speed on the spot where they suppose the lion to be, who generally makes off from such formidable assailants. It is not an unknown thing for bulls to gore a lion to death. Gazelle deer and wild swine are the principal prey for the lion; but with a full-grown boar he has often a tremendous conflict, and sometimes the lion gets the worst of it; as I shall show you, O son of the English!" added the Reefian, "in a short tale of what I myself had the rare luck to witness when a very young man."

This announcement caused a general silence throughout the party; and the veteran, looking round with an air of very considerable dignity and importance, thus began:—

"Now this is a story of the Boar and *two* Lions.

"In the days of my youth, when a black moustache curled where now you see the hoary beard of my winter's age, I seldom passed a night within my father's hut; but sallying out with my gun, laid wait for the wild animals which frequented a neighbouring forest.

"One moonlight night I had taken my position on a high rock, which overhung a fountain and a small marsh, a favourable spot with our hunters to watch for boars, who resorted thither to drink and root.

"The moon had traversed half the heavens, and I, tired with waiting, had fallen into a dose, when I was roused by a rustling in the wood, as on the approach of some large animal. I raised myself with caution, and examined the priming of my gun, ere the animal entered the marsh. He paused and seemed to be listening, when a half growl, half bark, announced him to be a

boar, and a huge beast he was, and with stately step he entered the marsh.

"I could now see by the bright moon, as he neared my station, that his bristles were white with age, and his tusks gleamed like polished steel among the dark objects round him. I cocked my gun, and waited his approach to the fountain.

"Having whetted his ivory tusks, he began to root; but he appeared to be restless, as if he knew some enemy was at hand; for every now and then raising his snout, he snuffed the air.

"I marvelled at these movements, for as the breeze came from a quarter opposite to my position, I knew I could not be the object of the boar's suspicions.

"Now, however, I distinctly heard a slight noise near the edge of the marsh: the boar became evidently uneasy; and I heard him say with a clear voice, for you must know they were formerly men, '*I hope there is no treachery.*'

"This he repeated once or twice, and again began to root.

"Keeping a sharp look-out on the spot whence I heard the strange noise, I fancied I could distinguish the grim and shaggy head of a lion crouching upon his fore paws, and, with eyes that glared like lighted charcoal through the bushes, he seemed peering at the movements of the boar. I looked again, and now I could see plainly a lion creeping, cat-like, on his belly, as he neared the boar, who was busy rooting, but with bristles erect, and now and then muttering something that I could not understand.

"The lion had crept within about twenty feet of the boar, but was hidden in part by some rushes. I waited breathless for the result; and, although myself out of danger, I trembled with anxiety at the terrible scene.

"The boar again raised his snout, and half turned his side towards the lion, and I fancied I could see his twinkling eye watching the enemy. Another moment, and the lion made a spring, and was received by the boar, who reared up on his hind legs. I thought I could hear the blow of his tusks as the combatants rolled on the ground. Leaning over the rock, I strained my eyes to see the result. To my surprise the boar was again on his legs, and going back a few paces, rushed at his fallen foe: a loud yell was given by the lion, which was answered by the

distant howlings of the jackals. Again and again the ferocious boar charged, till he buried his very snout in the body of the lion, who was kicking in the agony of death. Blood indeed flowed from the sides of the boar, but his bristles still stood erect as he triumphed over the sultan of the forest, and now he seemed to be getting bigger and bigger. 'God is great!' said I, as I trembled with dread: 'He will soon reach me on the rock.' I threw myself flat on my face, and cried out, 'There is no other God but God, and Mohamed is his prophet!' I soon recovered my courage, and looked again. The boar had returned to his natural size, and was slaking his thirst in the fountain. I seized my gun, but, reflecting, said within myself, 'Why should I kill him? He will not be of any use to me; he has fought bravely, and left me the skin of a lion, and perhaps he may be a Jin: '* so I laid down the gun, contenting myself with thoughts of the morrow.

"The boar had left the fountain, and was again busied rooting in the marsh, when another slight noise, as of a rustling in the wood, attracted my notice, and I could perceive the smooth head of a lioness looking with surprise and horror at the body of her dead mate.

" 'What! treachery again!' said the boar in a low tone.

" 'God is great!' said the lioness; 'but he shall pay for this! What! a pig! an infidel! to kill a lion! One spring, and I will do for him.' Having said these words, she advanced boldly. The boar stood prepared, grinding his teeth with rage. She paused, and again retreated to the wood, and I could hear her say, 'O God! all merciful Creator! What an immense boar! what an infidel! what a Christian of a pig!'

" 'May God burn your great-great-grandmother,' said the boar.

"On hearing the creature *curse* her parent, she again stopped, and, lashing her tail, roared with a voice that the whole wood re-echoed, and she said, 'There is no conqueror but God.'

"The boar stamped his hoofs, and gnashed his tusks again with rage; his grisly bristles, red with the blood of her mate, stood on end; then, lowering his snout, he rushed headlong

* An evil genius or spirit.

against the lioness, who, springing aside, avoided the dread blow. A cloud came over the moon; I could not see distinctly, but I heard every blow of the paw and every rip of the tusk. There was a dead silence; again the cloud had passed, and the heavens were clear, and I saw the lioness with her fore paws on the body of the boar.

"I seized my gun, and aimed at her head; that was her last moment.

"The morning dawned. I descended from the rock. The claw of the lioness still grasped in death the body of the boar. Many severe wounds showed that the boar had again fought bravely.

"The lions were the finest I ever saw, and I made good profit by that night's work."

We were still applauding the old hunter's story, when a gaunt Arab, thrusting forward his bare and sinewy leg, exclaimed, "Look at these scars, and keep in mind, O ye faithful, and thou, O son of the English, that it is not only dogs that are wounded or killed in chace of the *boar*."

"Let us hear how you got them," said the young mountaineer, the owner of the dog that had been killed.

"It is soon told," said the man of scars.

"Some eight years past, during harvest-time, I was watching at night for a boar in a field of ripe barley near *Ras Ashacár*,* and had fired at a large boar, who reeled and fell, but got up again and made away.

"At dawn of day I went to the spot where the animal had fallen, and finding marks of blood, I traced them to some brushwood in the centre of the field, which spot I ringed, and, perceiving the animal had not gone away, I was thinking what might be best to do, my gun cocked in my hand, when I heard a rush, and before I could get the gun to my shoulder, the boar was upon me; the gun was dashed out of my hand, and I expected every rip I received that my doom had been written. God knows how long this encounter lasted; the time seemed to be as an age.

"Finding no manner of escape, I slipped my arms from the

* Cape Spartel.

gelab, and escaped out, leaving the animal to vent his rage on my garment. I crawled off, but fainted from loss of blood.

“ I did not recover my senses till I was found by my family, who carried me home to *Mesnàna*,* half dead. I told my story there, and a party of hunters went out directly to revenge my wounds. They found the beast had again retreated to his lair, having cut my dress into shreds. He attacked them as he had done myself, but they were prepared, and soon killed him. I was not able to stand on my legs for many months after.”

“ The son of the English,” said Sharky, pointing to me, “ had just as narrow an escape four years ago, when he and the son of America attacked a boar at bay.”

“ Let us hear,” said they all, “ O Nazarene ! ”

I complied with their request, and, suiting my style to my audience, told my tale much after the following fashion :—

“ It was in the month of October, O ye faithful children of the Prophet, and early in the morning, that I received a message from the son of America, who had passed the night in the hills watching for boar, begging me to join him at the marshes of Boobána as soon as possible, and to bring my hunter Sharky, with his two dogs, and an *extra* gun. The messenger told me that my friend had wounded a large boar ; and that, while tracking him, the animal had rushed from the thicket ; that his rifle had missed fire ; and that, had it not been for a ruined wall on which he had taken refuge, he would have fared badly.

“ I soon joined my friend, whom I found still perched on the topmost point of the wall waiting my arrival.

“ The boar had moved off to some distance in the thicket. We soon got on the track of the beast, and found, by the print of his hoofs, that he was wounded on the right hind leg.

“ ‘ At him, *Merkis*,’ said Sharky, as he slipped his dogs. ‘ Get out, you Jew ! There is only one God ! ’ Which the old hound *Zeitsoon* answered by *bow* ; and the little cur *Merkis*, whose hide was striped like a zebra’s from the ribs of boars, yelped with joy as he got on the scent.

“ ‘ That’s him,’ shouted Sharky. ‘ None but the one God ! ’

“ The dogs had now headed us some hundred yards, when we

* A village near Tangier.

heard *Zeitsoon* give tongue, as when the boar is at bay ; and it was quite certain that this was a large one, for both the dogs seemed to be keeping at a respectful distance.

“ I had scrambled through the thicket within some few yards of the place where the dogs were giving tongue, and was calling to my companions to know where they were, in case I fired ; but the only answer I received, O ye faithful, was given me by the boar, who was nearer than I had imagined. Luckily I had kept clear of his path ; so he dashed by within a few paces of me, without my being able to get a shot, or he a rip. The dogs followed in full cry, and had reached an open space, when we heard a piteous howl. I made for the spot. Poor *Zeitsoon* had been almost severed in half. The boar, we supposed, had laid in wait for him in the open space.

“ Sharky, when he saw the frightful state of his brave and faithful hound, sat down, without saying a word, and, taking his turban, began to bind up the wound, whilst he offered up a prayer for the life of the poor dog. The boar had now managed to make his way up the opposite bank ; and little *Merkis*, heedless of his companion’s fate, yelped on the track ; when again a howl grated on our ears. Sharky started up on his feet, and, brandishing his bill-hook, shouted to the full extent of his lungs, ‘Hide yourself, *Merkis*. Do not trust him. He is an infidel.’

“ The dog showed he was not much hurt, by still giving tongue, though in such a manner as told us that the boar had again come to bay.

“ Having called a council of war, my friend and I determined to go in to the boar by ourselves, as more than two persons would only create confusion.

“ The enraged beast had come to bay in a jungle of gum-cistus, entangled with briars—a very unfavourable place for our attack. However, having thrown off our shooting-jackets, and examined the priming of our guns, we entered the wood, agreeing to keep some few paces from each other.

“ At first we made against the wind, and kept clear of the boar-paths, which is the best method of avoiding an unexpected attack. Having advanced some way through the thicket, I was obliged to return to a boar-path, for I found it was impossible to make way through the brambles, having already left most of my covering among the thorns.

“ I moved slowly onward in a stooping position, keeping my gun as a battery in front ; behind me walked an English *setter*, who, being useless for partridge shooting, I was training for the nobler sport.

“ The light hardly penetrated the dense jungle, so that I could not distinguish my companion through the gloom, although I heard him advancing as cautiously as myself.

“ At length I got within about fifteen paces of the spot where the dog was giving tongue. I knew I was in an exposed position, but could not avoid it ; being unable to move to the right or left, the brambles were so thickly matted together. *Merkis*, encouraged by my presence, ran to and fro yelping bravely : but searched in vain to get a sight of the enemy.

“ ‘ Can you see him ? ’ said the son of America, who was some yards to my left.

“ ‘ Hush ! ’ I replied, for at that moment I fancied I could hear the beast move. My setter also now pricked up his ears and rushed forward. It was the affair of an instant, for hardly had I fixed my gun to my shoulder when I saw *Cato* pushed forward by the boar, and howling with fright.

“ It was useless to fire ; for such was their position, that I should have killed the dog without hurting the boar. But the difficulty was soon removed ; for the boar, throwing the dog behind him, at once was on the muzzle of my gun. I pulled both triggers ; but the very instant that I fired, my gun was dashed from my hand ; and I and the enraged animal rolled together on the ground. I was undermost, and managed to keep my face downwards to the earth, lying as flat and as still as possible. The path of the boar being, happily for me, a small watercourse, had been worn away ; so that the shallow trench somewhat protected me from its tusks. Having recovered from the shots, the monster began to belabour me with his snout ; but, being a little flurried, I suppose, could not manage to get a rip. I was in a terrible fright, and hallooed for assistance, expecting every moment to be in the same plight as poor *Zeitsoon*, whose dreadful wound flashed across my mind.

“ My companion had now come up boldly to the rescue. ‘ Take care,’ cried I, ‘ you don’t put a ball into me.’ *Bang, bang*, went both barrels. The boar left me, and made at his new assailant, who, keeping his gun steady, and having the ad-

vantage of being in the thicket, was preserved from the awkward accident which had happened to myself. *Merkis*, seeing him in danger, had boldly laid hold of the boar behind; and Cato was mustering courage, like myself, to assist him; when the boar, worried by *Merkis*, shook him from his hold, and turned after the dogs. Cato was again wounded.

"Having recovered my gun, which by the blow of his snout had been thrown from my hand, I requested my companion to examine me, and see whether I was injured, for I was covered with blood, and whether it was the boar's or mine I could not say, so completely had fear taken away all sense of pain.

" 'Load your gun,' was his cool reply; 'and then we will see what is the matter.'

"We now heard the hunters shouting to us from outside the wood to abandon the boar; that they were certain he was a *Jin*, and that we should both of us be killed or receive some dreadful wound.

"The dogs were giving tongue at some distance ahead of us, and again Sharky shouted—'God is great! Get out, you black *Jin*.'

" 'Come,' said my cool friend, having examined me and found I was only marked by the snout and hoofs of the pig, 'I calculate we will fix him this time. Let us keep together, however, and it is my turn to go first. Finding that I was not quite killed, and roused by the tongue of the dogs, I again dashed onward with him into the thicket.

" 'Do you see him?' said I, as we approached the dogs.

" 'Yes,' he whispered; 'make yourself easy, he is coming towards us.' I grasped my gun, and stooping abreast with him in the path, we awaited our foe's assault. He was white with age. Blood was streaming down his side. He did not appear to see us; but was watching the dogs.

" 'Now,' cried I, 'four barrels at once, and I think we can kill even a *Jin*.'

"We fired—the boar fell, got up, staggered, and again rushed gallantly towards us.

"The branches which we clung to for safety barely sustained our weight. My companion, who is a larger man than myself, sometimes swung as low as the snout of the boar.

"*Merkis* again called off the animal's attention, giving a sly

snap, and then retreating. The boar moved from us a few paces, and we ventured to quit our trees. I had no balls left: my companion had but one, which he now fired, having put the muzzle of his gun almost on the animal's head, who, though much weakened from loss of blood, was still standing gallantly. As the son of America fired, the beast sank on his hind legs.

"We drew our knives, and, assassin-like, stole behind him. Fierce even in death, he tore with his teeth the bushes near him. Foam and blood gushed from his mouth. As we advanced he made a fresh effort; but at the same moment our hunting-knives were plunged in his heart.

" 'Who-op, who-op,' we cried; 'the devil is dead!' *Merhis* said something to the same purpose. Poor fellow, he had received an ugly rip in the neck. We found every shot that was fired had entered the body of the boar. The carcass bore eleven marks of our balls.

"We had great trouble to drag the bulky brute into the open field. He measured six feet four inches from snout to tail, and three feet three inches from shoulder to hoof, and, though not fat, weighed above twenty stone. However, lean as he was, he yielded us some capital chops.

"Poor *Zeitsoon* was carried home; but never recovered his wounds, though he lingered many days."

"There is no strength nor power but in God!" cried my audience.

After a pause, an old fellow, who had until now been quite silent, pushed off the hood of his *gelab*, and looking earnestly at me, asked if I was not the Nazarene who had killed the *Melon Boar*?

"Yes," I replied, "I am he."

"Come, then," said the lion-hunter, "you owe me still another tale; for I have told you two."

"The play is fair," said I; "and the story shall be told."

"The *Melon Boar*, then, I must apprise you, was the largest beast of the kind I ever saw; and he was reported to be committing great devastation on some melon-fields in the wood of *Belayashee*.

"I and our fellow-hunter, Ali Sefer, sallied out to try our luck.

"On arriving at the field, a little before sunset, we found the

owners with a pack of curs preparing to bivouac, for the purpose of scaring away the boar; and they told us, it was no use firing at him, for there was not a huntsman of any fame in the neighbourhood who had not had a shot, but without success. It was, they said, as much as they could do to prevent the beast destroying all the melons, as he cared little for either dogs or men: nay, he would stay quietly at the border of the wood, until he found an occasion for rushing in to seize a melon, with which he would make off into the thicket; and when dogs and men were tired with watching and overcome by sleep, he would boldly enter the ground and bite, as if for mere spite, a piece out of every melon that was fit to eat. In fact, they thought him to be some evil-disposed *Jin*, and therefore it might be even an unholy act to kill him; for there was no knowing, some whispered, what might happen in such a case.

“ ‘ Well,’ said I, ‘ let me try my hand, and if I fail as others have done, I will pay for every melon he destroys: but I hope for success; for we Nazarenes, you know, have ourselves something of the *Jin* about us: and when *Jin* meets *Jin*, the chances must be nearly equal.’

“ ‘ *Allah Akbar*,’ said one of the melon-growers: ‘ if, Christian, you only saw his tusks, and how he puts up his bristles when he enters the field, you would wish yourself in Tangier again!’ ‘ But come,’ said they, ‘ let us place the Nazarene, for the sun is nearly set, and you may be certain the boar is now listening to all we are saying.’

“ I was now conducted to a pomegranate bush, near which there were some ripe melons. Here I was to station myself; and by squatting cross-legged on the ground, I was partly hidden by some long grass. Ali Sefer wished to be my companion, but I preferred, as I always do at night-hunts, to be alone, being thus more likely to keep awake.

“ ‘ May God preserve you,’ said the party as they took their leave; ‘ and take care,’ they added, ‘ not to sleep. We shall be within hearing of your shot, and will come to your assistance the moment you fire.’

“ ‘ Well, good night,’ I replied: and I now put on my hooded gelab, and having rolled a bit of white paper round the muzzle of my gun, I settled myself in the best position for my bivouac.

“The sound of the Moors’ footsteps had scarcely died away, when a slight *crackling* in the wood drew my attention; and soon I heard, and plainly, the rooting and the footsteps of some large animal.

“‘At any rate,’ thought I, ‘he does not move like a supernatural being.’ Whilst I was waiting in this state of excitement for the boar’s approach, I heard the tread of a man’s foot in a different direction from that by which the party had retired; and shortly I saw a long gun-barrel glisten in the twilight, over the hedge. When the man who carried it reached the low gate, and had cautiously thrown it open, he peered into the field; and then, to my surprise, and some fear too, he levelled his long barrel exactly at the spot where I was sitting. In a moment I cocked my own gun, and pointing it at his head, called out in Arabic—‘Who is there?’

“‘Your better,’ was his reply.

“‘That,’ I retorted, ‘remains to be proved. Down with your gun, or I fire!’

“‘Son of the English,’ said the hunter, who recognised my voice, ‘thank God! I did not fire; but you looked so very like a boar, as you sat under the pomegranate bush, that I was just going to pull the trigger when you called out.’

“‘I fear,’ said I to the hunter, who proved to be no other than my friend Hadj Abdallah, ‘you have spoiled my sport, for the boar will have made off.’

“‘No, no,’ he said, ‘I have fired at this boar half a dozen times in the same night: he is now listening to what we are saying; and when we have ceased to make a noise, he will come in for his melon just as if nobody was here, and carry it off to the wood.’

“I now begged the Hadj to join the rest of the party, for I wished to be alone, and accordingly he took his leave.

“The last rays of daylight had now disappeared; the night was cold; there was no moon; and the stars, usually bright in your climate, were dimmed by clouds: the wood began to echo with the howlings of jackals, and the squalling of the genet and ichneumon, searching for their prey: and soon the dull sound of the evening-gun at Gibraltar came booming to my ears, and told it was nine o’clock. I had given up all hope of the boar

returning, when a dark shadow passed rapidly across the field, and, retreating to the wood, rather startled me. I then heard the munching of a melon. 'That was cleverly done,' thought I, 'and Jin-like; but try such a manœuvre again, my fine fellow, and I will be your match.'

"Some minutes elapsed, and again the same dark shadow passed, stopped for a moment, and then made towards the wood. I determined, however, not to fire till I could get a near shot; and I thought that, perhaps, the animal hearing no noise, would be less rapid in his movements. Again and again the same thing occurred; and I was counting the number of melons he would manage to destroy before the morning, and which I should have to pay for, when the boar, entering as before, stopped, and began to blow, and make the low moan which you Moors interpret 'I hope there is no treachery.' I aimed my gun at his head, which was towards me; but he was too far off for me to fire at him in a dark night. Taking courage on finding no dog to molest him, he began to root quite at his ease, and gradually neared the spot where I was posted, till he came within twenty paces.

"I held my breath, and cocked my gun; his whole side was turned towards me: I aimed at his shoulder, I then lowered my gun to be sure that my aim was good; again I pointed, again I lowered it; a third time I levelled, pulled both triggers at once, and threw myself flat on my face. I heard the beast rush by me, and, as it appeared to me, fall some twenty yards beyond: there was a slight kicking for a few moments, and then all was quiet. Still lying on the ground, I quietly loaded my gun, and half raised myself to see if I could make him out.

"The owners of the field and Ali Sefer soon joined me. I told them what I had done, but they would not believe that the animal was wounded.

"'Take care,' said I, 'of yourselves; for he may be on the top of us before we are aware.'

"'Where,' said one of them, 'did you hear him last?'

"I led the man to the spot among some long grass.

"'There ought to be blood hereabouts, then, if the animal is wounded,' said he, putting down his hand. As he did this he

started back, and ran off shouting 'E'Sheetan, E'Sheetan.'* I put the muzzle of my gun down, and found that there was the boar, but the beast was already quite dead.

"They would hardly credit my success at first: but when they discovered the monster to be truly dead, they were most eloquent in their praises.

"'May God make you a true believer,' was their shout, 'for you have no equal.'

"As the morning dawned, it showed my game to have been a very powerful animal, and excessively fat with his good living.

"When I bade adieu to my honest friends the melon-growers, they obliged me to accept a present of their excellent fruit, as a reward for having destroyed the robber *Jin*."

* The Devil—the Devil.

CHAPTER IV

Proceed on our Journey—River Kholj—Its Inhabitants—Pass of Garbeea—Scene at a Well—Partridges—River of Mills—Village of Ammar—Mona—Horse Fight—Economy of Arab Tent—A Visit to the Ladies—Pop the Question—Introduction to a Harem—Description of the Interior—Lose my Heart—Estimate of Female Beauty.

My party being ready for a start, we bade our friends the hunters good sport, and proceeded on our journey.

We soon obtained a fine view of the coast, as far as the ancient town of Azyla, and the surf of the Atlantic was visible, as we overlooked the sand-hills which formed the long line of coast.

Our path, as we descended the hill, was like a staircase; so, for safety, we gave our nags their heads, trusting entirely to their cautious treading. Having reached the bottom of the hill, we pursued our course through a plain about two miles broad, of the richest alluvial soil, patched here and there by fine crops of drà and maize. In the rainy season this flat land is covered with water, some two feet deep; and then it swarms with water-fowl, amongst which are sometimes seen the lady-like Numidian crane and flocks of the stately flamingo, looking at a distance, with their scarlet wings, like a troop of British soldiery.

The river *Kholj* meanders through the plain; it is a dangerous torrent in the winter, and many a man and beast have found a watery grave in it, though now it scarcely reached our horses' knees.

The Hadj, who had travelled in the East, and had seen the crocodile of the Nile, and therefore should be good authority, told me that a courier swimming across this stream had his arm torn off by one of those monsters. But although there is a vague opinion among the people of this country that the crocodile is an inhabitant of some of their rivers, I suspect the Hadj was mistaken, and that a shark was the malefactor.

Reaching the southern side of the plain, we ascended the pass of *Garbeea*. The soil of this upland is a red sand, in which I noticed a considerable variety of fossil shells, some of great beauty.

An ancient well on the side of our track up the hill drew my attention. A very pretty Arab girl stood by it, having in one hand a pitcher of such classic form as would have done credit to the ancient potters of Etruria; whilst in the other she held a small goat-skin, which she was so busied in filling that she let fall her veil of striped cotton, and displayed her *sacred* features to the unhallowed gaze of the *infidel*. A few wild olive-trees overhung the spot, and completed a very pretty picture.

A large tribe of Arabs, the *Oolad Sebaita*, dwell in this district, being nomad within its extent, as is the case with all that race throughout North Africa; and the sons of *Sebaita* were now encamped on the top of the hill, which forms here the left bank of the basin of *Al Kholj*. Palmettos and furze were, at this dry season, almost the only objects that parched nature presented in a garb of green, and seemed to be the only vegetation which the herds and flocks could now find to browse on.

We pursued our way through scattered fields of the stubble of fine wheat and barley, which showed, what indeed the traveller cannot fail to observe throughout the whole of West Barbary, that it wants but a good government, encouraging industry and fostering the people's comfort, to make its wide extent, more than half of which is now as neglected as the desert, one vast garden, producing alternately in its hills and valleys the agricultural wealth of the north of Europe and the tropics.

Our path literally swarmed with partridges, and, having my gun, I blazed away unmercifully; for, unlike their persecuted tribe in the neighbourhood of Tangier, they would not rise, but continued running vexatiously at a short distance in front of me, till I was constrained, in unsportsmanlike fashion, to fire at them on the ground, when I laid low about half a covey at a shot.

One would have fancied I was about to attack some dread beast, for the Hadj kept close in my rear, prepared with a formidable knife, and waiting the effect of my shot, when he would

rush forward and cut the throats of the victims, while he turned them towards the tomb of his prophet, pronouncing the "*Bismillah*"* ere the last struggles were past. Some fine birds he picked up; but as life appeared extinct, he again dropped them in distress. It was one of Mohamed's, or rather Moses's, wise ordinances to prevent cruelty in the mode of putting animals to death, that if the knife be blunt, or the smallest notch be found visible after its use, the animal is declared unlawful food. There is, however, some dispute amongst the doctors of Islam, whether what is killed in the chase is not lawful even if it die before the hunter reaches it, provided, on charging the missile, he has pronounced "*Bismillah*."

In the ardour of the sport, our whole party had wandered from the proper track, and we were now trudging on in a direction which would have led us to Alcassar, when a shepherd, with the quick intelligence and benevolent courtesy that are often found among the children of nature in this country, divining our error, hallooed at the top of his voice from a great distance, and brought us back to the right road.

About four in the evening we reached a beautiful valley, through which ran a clear stream, called the River of Mills; the ruins of several of which are crumbling on its banks, as I have observed to be the case in other parts of this country,—sorrowful evidence that this important engine has dropped into disuse amongst these barbarians of the nineteenth century. Here the nags were watered, as we were approaching the place of our encampment for the night, where there would not be such means of quenching their thirst.

On reaching the summit of the opposite side of the valley, we were cheered by a view of the tents of the wealthy Sheikh Hadj Cassem, which lay before us distant about an hour's journey.

On approaching the dwelling of the sheikh, who, under the Basha of the northern province, is himself Hakkem, or governor, over a district some thirty miles in breadth, we passed through a large Arab village named Ammar, signifying in Arabic "the cultivated," or "the colonized." Troops of sun-burnt children, some completely naked, and packs of various kinds of dogs,

* In the name of God.

screeched and howled at our strange appearance as we passed. Between five and six o'clock we came to a halt, when the Mallem was dispatched to announce our arrival with many salams, and to ask permission to pitch our tent for the night near those of the Hakkem for better security.

Hadj Cassem was indisposed; but as soon as he heard of our arrival, he sent his principal *saheb*, or follower, to bid us welcome, and to express his regret that he was prevented by illness from saluting us in person. He requested me to order whatever I required, and to pitch my tent on the right of his own, which we did immediately, assisted by the Saheb Kaid Alarby, who was brother-in-law to the Hakkem, and whom we soon found a jovial trifler with the tenets of his prophet.

We had scarcely pitched our tents, when four men presented themselves, bearing a mona* of sheep, fowls, barley, &c., which were laid at our feet on the part of the Hakkem as a provision for the night, and enough there was for five times the number of our little party. One of the bearers, who acted as spokesman, bawled out "that this was only a small token of his lord's esteem for the British, whom he regarded as the most honest of the Room (Europeans), and well deserving the Moslem's esteem, having always been their best ally." I called the Saheb Kaid Alarby aside, and, having expressed to him how sensibly I felt the friendship of his chief, I intimated that, being unprovided with a gift on my own part, it was out of my power to receive such liberal *mona*, but I ventured to say I should be happy to pay its value.

"Do you call this a present?" exclaimed Alarby; "if the Hakkem had sent you a horse or a couple of cows, you might then talk about making some return. You are here as 'the guests of God,' and as such must be provided for. If you refuse the mona, not a man in the village dare sell or give you a crumb of bread; and it is not to you only that we do this, but to every one. Even now," he continued, "a miserable infidel of a Jew arrived here, and a mona of bread and a fowl was sent him by our lord."

* A gift of food for travellers, of which the name is supposed to have its origin in that of *manna*, the miraculous provision bestowed by the bounty of Heaven on the Israelites while wandering in the deserts of Arabia.

Finding all opposition useless, I accepted the offering with a good grace ; and, giving a trifle to each of the bearers, returned our thanks to the Kaid for his hospitality, the fame of which, I added, with a true Arabic flourish, was spread from east to west and from north to south, among Moslem, Christian, Jew, and Pagan.

We now retired to our tent, and having performed our ablutions and donned the dressing-gown and slippers, a comfortable *deshabille* at this season, we each of us surmounted the loose costume with a lady's bonnet and veil, the most approved mosquito curtain for the narrow compass of a tent, and with which we were provided by fair hands in Tangier, to guard us against those insects, which begin their detestable attacks towards evening.

The Saheb Alarby, hearing that I was on the look-out for a horse, now came to the tent to inform me that he had ordered the best in the village to be brought for my inspection. I accordingly sallied out in my strange costume, and was greeted with much less surprise and ridicule on the part of the Arabs than I should have been in my proper garb of a Christian man. In fact, my party-coloured dressing-gown gained the admiration of many, and as for my head-dress, one young urchin observed, after some deliberation, that it would be capital gear for robbing a bee-hive in.

Several fine barb stallions, held by the Hakkem's slaves, were led forward, amongst which was a powerful black colt, who, having managed, by rearing and plunging, to break loose from his conductor, attacked, with thrown back ears, open mouth, and tail erect, another of the stud ; and, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Arabs, accustomed to such freaks, a desperate fight ensued, —wheeling round as quick as lightning, rearing, and using their fore feet as dexterously as an expert boxer ; then galloping away from those who endeavoured to catch them, determined to have out their duel, snorting and squealing most wildly. This was a moment for the admirers of horse-flesh to see every muscle and nerve come into play in their fine action unrestrained :—

“ Imperiously he leaps, he neighs, he bounds,
And now his woven girths he breaks asunder ;
His ears uppricked, his braided hanging mane
Upon his compass'd crest now stands on end ;
His nostrils drink the air, and forth again

As from a furnace vapours doth he send ;
His eye, which glistens scornfully like fire,
Shows his hot courage and his hot desire.” *

The black colt was at length seized by the neck by his more vigorous adversary, who, pressing him to the ground, held him there till men came to the rescue, and separated the combatants.

Previous to our return to the tent, we took a stroll, accompanied by the Saheb Alarby, through the village. The winter residence of the Hakkem was an oblong building, constructed of large sun-dried bricks ; it had a flat terrace, was without windows, and a considerable portion of it was partitioned off as a pen for the cattle.

His tents, in which he chiefly resides during summer, had an appearance of comfort, being of the same class as the larger military tent used by superior officers in Morocco.

These tents are very different from those in common use with us : their walls are for the most part made of stout hempen cloth, but even those of a very considerable size have only one pole, which is generally square, and divided in two pieces ; it is of great strength, and placed in the centre. The arrangement of the cords is perhaps better adapted for expedition in pitching than our own. All the cords, being brought together, are attached to a longer one, which is fastened to a peg driven into the ground some twenty yards distant. The exterior is varied with figures cut in blue cloth to resemble what is commonly called the “bearded parapets.” A large globe surmounted by a javelin-point adorns the top.

The interior is lined according to the wealth of its owner, the material being sometimes strong silk or fine damask. I remember seeing the tent of an important personage, the governor of a province, which had been a gift from the sultan. It was very large, resembling in form the marquee of a European officer of high rank, and was formed within and without of fine broadcloth of brilliant scarlet and sky-blue. Mats, carpets, and cushions are the usual furniture of the tent, as they are of the houses in the towns.

The tents of the Arabs have a very different aspect, being of a

* Shakspeare.

black or brown stuff made of the palmetto fibre, of goats' hair or camels' wool, of each of which materials the natives form very strong webs for this purpose. They are supported by two poles, with a traverse bar connecting them at top to sustain the roof. These tents are seldom more than seven or eight feet high in the centre, but in length from twenty to thirty feet, and with some wealthy sheikhs they are considerably larger. Their form is somewhat similar to that of a boat with its keel upwards. The sides of the tent are, in the colder seasons of the year, pinned to the ground, but in the summer are so arranged as to leave a foot or more of space all round for ventilation; and the seclusion of the inhabitants is effected by a light hedging of some dry bushes, and often of withered plants of the *onopordon macrocanthum*, a splendid thistle that adorns the rich and neglected soil of North Marocco. From the free ventilation thus simply obtained, the Arab tents are far more cool in summer, and, probably, warmer in winter, than the more luxurious-looking houses of the Moors, who dwell in towns.

The tent-cloth is woven with such peculiar skill as to resist the penetration of wet, although, during both "the former and the latter rain," the clouds pour out their bounty as copiously as they did for "the chosen people in Judea," and, during the latter season, as heavily sometimes as within the tropics.

A simple reed-mat is spread as a floor, over which the wealthy lay a goats'-hair carpet. Every family has its brood of chickens, and these have their roosting quarter in a distant nook or compartment of the tent.

In one corner is to be seen the primitive hand-mill, which may at once be described by saying that it is in all respects the same simple machine that has been used from time immemorial by the inhabitants of our British Isles, and is yet to be seen as the quern of Scotland;—and the biblical reader, on seeing it worked by the women of West Barbary, will be reminded of the doom prophesied in the Gospel, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left."*

The millstones used throughout a great part of Al-gharb are cut from a vast cave about a mile and a half south of Cape

* Matthew xxiv. 41.

Spartel, which, from the considerable extent it has been worked for this and other purposes, seems to indicate a quarry of very great antiquity. And indeed I am led to believe that the cave sacred to Hercules, as recorded by Mela, was situated at this very spot.*

But to return to the interior of the Arab's tent: one sees near the quern two earthen slabs, between which they bake flat cakes of wheaten flour, or of barley, drà, or maize; all which are agreeable food when fresh. Their wheat and barley cakes are very like our Scots skons and bannocks both in taste and appearance.

In another place is seen the spinning-wheel and distaff, and a loom also; all these implements are evidently of the earliest forms, and are probably identically those of the days of Abraham. A large and grotesque-fashioned chest, painted in a rude but not inelegant Arabesque tracery of red, white, and blue colouring, with a few earthen jars, a saddle, and a long gun, complete the furniture of the Arab's home.

During the day their scanty couches are suspended like hammocks from the roof pole, thus allowing a freer space to the women in their domestic employments.

As we passed through the dooar, women and children flocked to the doors of the tents to have a sight of the Nazarene. I remarked amongst them a tall and aged dame, round whose neck was tattooed the representation of a chain, with the cross of Christ suspended to it. She perhaps could trace her descent from some tribe which had been tributary to the Roman colonists, who first planted the Christian church in these regions. Hence it may be inferred, that what under the empire of Rome and Byzantium was a needful token for security to the pagans, is yet retained by these close adherents to ancient usage; although the faith of their masters has been for ages changed, and not only has the necessity for the talisman ceased, but even its origin is forgotten amongst them.

There are several curious relics of Romish devotion still in use amongst them. The following, I am assured, is very generally

* These excavations extend for a considerable distance into the sea; and traces of quarrying are in many places clearly discernible several feet below the present *low-water* mark.

observed :—Should a woman in travail be in danger, the midwife and female friends assemble round her, and, waving white kerchiefs, implore the Virgin Mary to come to the assistance of the sufferer, saying, “O Mareea, Mareea, come, come :—delay not, O thou blessed one ; come to the help of this woman in danger,” &c. When the woman is delivered, a like ceremony takes place to facilitate the return of the Virgin Mary to paradise.

The tattooed old lady, advancing frankly towards our party, invited us to visit her tent, upon which, as we found the Saheb did not oppose our accepting her hospitality, we followed her, whilst Kaid Alarby kept aloof ; for, as he was known to be a sad rake, his approaching the women would have stirred up the demon of jealousy among their lords.

The country folk in Marocco, it may be observed by the way, are far less jealous for their women’s virtue than those in the towns—a pleasing evidence this of better principles springing out of the more simple life.

On entering the tent, we were surrounded by a female host ; and it was vastly amusing to observe the strange effect we produced among them. Some showed fear ; some cursed us ; some admired the whiteness of our skin, which, by the bye, was already tanned deeper than nut-brown ; others would touch us, and then leap back and laugh outright.

There was not much pretension to beauty amongst them ; their large black and hawk-like eyes, softened by the long silken eyelash, being in our opinion their only redeeming feature.

Our Arab hostess now handed us an ample bowl of milk, of which we partook ; and, returning our thanks, I gained the good graces of all our coterie of charmers by addressing the following Arabic couplet to them :—

“ My thoughts are perplexed. How can I describe your beauty !
Whether to compare it with the sun, the moon, or wandering star !
Snow and fire are in your cheeks assembled.
How wonderful is this union between the fire and snow ! ”

These were the first Arabic words I had spoken ; and there was a general burst of acclamation—“ He is Arby, he is Arby ! ” [an Arab]. Then followed a thousand questions ; but, having accidentally pulled off my glove, the clatter of tongues ceased at once, and all shrunk back in horror at what they considered an

act of sorcery, looking aghast, and seeming to mutter in alarm, "What next!" reminding me of the old story of the frog whose tail dropped off.

"O most merciful God!" the old woman exclaimed, "keep us from Jins, and from men that work by the evil spirit."

It cost me some trouble before I could prevail on any of them to feel the glove and be assured that it was not an outer skin of my own limb. Their confidence being after awhile regained, I was asked if the Nazarene women were pretty, and how many wives I had; and "Can Christian women," said one little girl, putting forward her hands, which were highly dyed with henna, "paint their hands like mine?"

"No, in truth," I replied, "and that is partly the reason I am not yet married; but I have long been in search of a pretty wife, and now I am willing to contract for any one, or two, or even three of the gazelles around me; and," added I, "a dower of camels, oxen, sheep, and everything else shall be given in treble the quantity that would be offered by one of your own race." Every brown face of young and old was now put forward, calling on me to choose.

"You are all beautiful," I exclaimed; "but the hospitality of my hostess has won my entire heart."

The younger of the assemblage were half amused, half vexed, on hearing me thus, with a serious countenance, select for my bride the gaunt old mistress of the tent.

This scene reminds me of a visit I had once the rare luck to make to the harem of a great man in this curious country.

Having passed the outer porch of the Cid's abode through a low arch of horseshoe form, the party of which I was one were conducted into a little garden, where the verbena-louisa, the jessamine, and the rose vied in luxuriant vegetation. Our path was shaded from the piercing rays of a September sun by the thick foliage of vines trained over fantastic trellises of cane, through which hung temptingly within our reach fine grapes, both red and white, with some of a singular ash-colour, and others of a long tapering form, peculiar perhaps to this country, and called, in the poetical language of the people's Arab ancestry, "the damsel's fingers."

We ascended a few steps to an alcove, in front of which played

a bubbling fountain, and through its jet of sparkling water came the cool breeze scented by flowers. Here we found our host sitting on a rich Rabat carpet, in the cross-legged tailor fashion universal in this country, with many an embroidered cushion to complete the luxury of his divan.

A little behind the great man, yet where he could wait and watch for every wish of his lord, stood a young bronze-coloured slave, whose fine eyes rolled their white orbs in astonishment at the Nazarene visitors.

Three handsomely carved chairs had been placed for the Christians; such chairs as one might suppose to have been a gift to an ancestor of the kaid from some friendly governor of Tangier in the time of our merry King Charles.

"You are welcome," said our host, as we entered the alcove, and accompanied his salutation with a mechanical counting on his rosary of green ivory beads. "You are welcome—God knows I have long wished for this visit." Then followed a succession of compliments, which we returned with compound interest. After a time he nodded to the slave, who, opening a side door, ushered in several attendants, the first of whom bore a polished brass tray, on which was arranged a vast bowl of the finest sugar in very large lumps, with a teapot and diminutive cups of delicate porcelain; the others followed, bearing pyramids of cakes and sweetmeats, all of which having been placed before us on little stands of carved wood, painted and gilded in Arabesque, they bowed and retired.

We were now to be drenched with tea; for, like the pipe in Turkey, at all hours of the day must a guest submit to be regaled with this watery beverage; and three times, alas! were our cups to be drained of their over-sweet contents; for the Moor never thinks his drink too sweet, and we well knew that declining any portion would be taken as a slight.

We were rising to take leave, when our host begged us to be seated, saying he would not let us go away without evincing the strongest evidence of his regard for us: "And I have been considering," said he, "what might be most agreeable to you, and I think," and here he drew out a massive key from his girdle, "I think I have hit upon it. You shall see my harem, into which no man has ever entered, not even my own sons since their boy-

hood. Although my domestic establishment is not to be compared to the luxury of your houses, the curiosity of a European may be gratified by seeing it; for you are ever searching for the strange and marvellous, and your industry has been justly rewarded; for you Room (Romans) have penetrated the mysteries of every science, and have found, by your indefatigable pursuit of human learning, a remedy for every ill to which mortal men are subject, except one—death, the inevitable doom of Moslem and of all!”

He rose, and thrust the key into an ingenious-looking lock. “These,” said he, “are the apartments of my last lala, whom our lord the sultan—God prolong his life, and make happy his existence!—has lately presented to me; and, as the ladies are apt to quarrel with any rival in the affections of their master, I have lately built these rooms for her reception.”

Such presents, by the way, are common in this country from the Moorish potentate to his favoured officers; but, thought I, as I crossed the sacred threshold, this must be a hazardous present to receive: the fair one, relieved from the duties of the court, may be difficult to please in the humbler mansion.

The habitation of the favourite consisted of a court-yard open to the sky, with a room on each side; a fountain played in the centre, and in one quarter there was a vapour-bath. The floor and sides of the court were prettily laid in coloured tiles, bordered with precepts from the Koran. The folding-doors which opened into the principal dormitory were beautifully carved in intricate mathematical figures, and the walls were richly decorated in Arabesque stucco-work: fine velvet couches and cushions of embroidered leather were ranged around the room; and opposite the door, on an elaborately painted rack, hung a fine Algerine gun, the barrel of which was curiously damascened with gold, and the stock inlaid with coral and silver: below it was suspended a clumsy Moorish sword in a scabbard of gold and velvet; this weapon was also a gift of his Shereefian majesty.

The ceiling was adorned with minute mouldings richly painted and gilded, and of the same intricate devices as are yet to be seen in the Alhambra of the Caliphat in Grenada.

At one end of the room stood the trousseau-box of a bride, made of the famous pine of the Moorish highlands, called

L'Arise; it was elegantly carved in Saracenic fashion, and from the fine perfume of the timber must, I should suppose, be well adapted for the preservation of apparel. On this box I noticed an eight-stringed lute and the noisy *tomtom*.

Thence we passed into a large court ornamented with slender pillars of white marble; and through rooms hung with damask, and furnished with carpets of the finest colours, and much thicker than the best of those from Turkey.

Instead of pictures, which are all proscribed in Islam, hung the old-fashioned German mirrors in large and newly-gilded frames; but I started on looking into one of them, for I found my face so absurdly distorted in the wavy glass, that I had well nigh spoiled all my courtesies by a hoarse laugh.

A brass frame, in the shape of two intersecting squares, served as a chandelier in the centre of the ceiling of each room. These brazen frames are sometimes composed of two intersecting equilateral triangles, and this latter appears to be the correct form of a symbol which is held sacred by several races in the East, under the name of Solomon's seal.

The only apertures for light and air to these apartments, when the doors are shut, are worked in plaster, seeming almost as delicate as filagree; they fill several niches in the form of what we call "Gothic windows;" and of these there were three or four over each doorway; there was, however, one small chamber in the second story, out of harm's way, which had two tolerably sized windows, closely latticed however, whence the prisoned inmates of the harem might unseen feast their eyes on a valley of orange and citron plantations, which border a serpentine stream named "Boosafa" (the Father of Clearness). This beautiful stream runs rapidly from its inexhaustible sources in the rugged pile of mountains that overhang the city, whose name of *Tetouan* indicates, in the Berber tongue, its many fountains.

Whilst our host was noting to my companions the names of the villages that are to be seen from a lattice, through which they were admiring the distant scene, I became impatient at a nomenclature which I had already by heart, and so moved sauntering away, peering about into sundry curious nooks and passages that form the strange distribution of a Moorish palace. At length, becoming somewhat alarmed at my own hardihood,

I turned to rejoin the master of the house; when a door, through the chinks of which all my movements must have been watched, was thrown open, and out rushed the Houris, black, white, half-caste, fat, thin, old, and young! It was impossible for me to escape, and had I made a precipitate movement, I should have become liable to the worst of imputations; so I stood stock still, and was quickly arrested by the powerful paws of a jet-black dame, and then commenced a general scrutiny of my person.

"Look," said one, "I told you the Nazarenes had a mouth, and a nose, and ears, just like Mohamedans!"

"See," said another, taking up my hand; "one, two, three, four, five!!—exactly the same number!"

"But what are these?" screamed a third, who had laid hold of the skirts of my coat; "does he hide his tails here?"

"And he laughs, too!" they exclaimed.

From this, indeed, I could no longer refrain, although I was becoming seriously uneasy lest my absence should be discovered by the great man; for I was now in the midst of the most forbidden fruit, although it proved far inferior to what my fertile fancy had previously imagined. Indeed a less attractive posse of womankind I never beheld; for almost all these ladies were at a time of life when the fineness of the Moorish features had disappeared; and the only redeeming grace that remained to them, which is common, indeed, to all the white women of West Barbary, was the large gazelle eye. As to the admired *en bon point* of youth, it had been replaced by a gross fatness, which smothered forms that were once perhaps of perfect symmetry. According to the taste of the Moor, a lady is in perfection when her charms are a load for a camel.

One, however, of this motley circle deserved all my admiration as a Mauritanian Venus. This was a delicate-looking girl; her age, I thought, was sweet fifteen—the prime of womanhood in this precocious country; for their beauty seems to fade with the *teens*. Her complexion was very fair, her eyes dark hazel, to which the black border of "Kohol" * gave a languid expression. She had a coral-lipped mouth, round as a ring, as the Moorish ode describes the feature.† Her black hair, braided

* Antimony.

† See the Moorish ode at the end of the volume.

with silver cords, waved in profusion over her shoulders. Her sylph-like figure was clothed in a pale green caftan, embroidered on the bosom and skirt in silver thread. This garment reached a little below her knees, and over it she wore an outer robe of light gauze, confined around the waist by a red zone of Fez silk. The sleeves of her caftan were wide, and open near the wrist; showing at every turn an arm like alabaster, which was encircled by a plain but massive bracelet of Soodan gold; and her uncovered legs were seen from below the caftan clasped with chased silver; her feet were also bare, for in her sally with the rest she had forgotten her slippers; her feet, as well as her hands, were dyed with henna of a bright orange colour. Over her head she had thrown a light muslin kerchief; but in this sudden tumult her curiosity got the better of her national caution, and she stood before me quite unveiled.

During the uproar occasioned by my intrusion, the youthful damsel was the only one silent; but now taking alarm from the noise of the rest, she half hid her pretty features, and cried in an anxious whisper, "Hush! hush! hush! My father will hear; and then, oh! what will become of this young Christian?"

"What do we care?" said a barrel of a woman, with eyes that rolled like gooseberries in a saucer, and whom I took to be the most favoured dame of this party-coloured assemblage; for her dress far surpassed that of all the rest in costliness. "It was the Christian's fault for daring to ——." She could not finish her speech, for the gruff voice of their lord was heard.

"What is that noise? Where's the other Nazarene?" And then his heavy step came tramping nearer and nearer.

Off scampered all the surrounding spirits, black, white, and grey. The little damsel was the last to move, and evidently with less apprehension than the rest. Veiling closely all her features except one dear eye, she said to me, in a quick whisper, "Don't be afraid, Nazarene. Tell my father it was all our fault; he is very good-natured, and you are so young."

I had by luck a rosebud at my breast. I answered by giving it to her with a thanking smile; and instantly she flew after her companions.

"*Ellee Haramy!* Hollo, young rascal!" said the big man, as he laid hold of me by the collar; and I began to feel that my

head was very insecure on my shoulders. "Kah, kah, kah!" and his fat sides shook with laughter; "So, boy! (my chin was yet smooth) you have been among my women, eh! Don't you know you deserve to die?" suiting the action to the word by drawing his hand across my throat. "Eh! trying to carry off my gazelles! Eh! you young Nazarene."

Though frightened out of my wits, I had just breath enough to gasp out, "O my lord, if I have done anything to displease you, attribute it to ignorance of your customs. In my country it is usual to pay our respects to the ladies in preference to everybody else."

"Ah! deceiver," said he; "you Nazarenes must have a pleasant time of it too. Kah, kah, kah! I must go to your country. Kah, kah! Yes, they speak true; they speak true when they say that your Paradise is on earth. Come along, young sir; I will show you the kitchen, where I have a black beauty in a cook; pay Christian attention to her, if you please. Kah, kah, kah!" And so he led me off, and shortly afterwards we took our leave. In the evening a handsome present was brought me from the great man, which showed that I had not lost his good graces by my audacious visit to his harem.

Here I must present to the reader the Moorish estimate of female beauty, although I am aware that others have given it; for it is found also among the Oriental Arabs, from whom indeed those of Al Gharb derive not only their parentage, but all their more refined ideas, and whatever they retain of poetry in thought and language.

"Four things in a woman should be black—the hair, the eyebrows, the eye-lashes, and the iris of the eyes: four should be white—the complexion, the white of the eyes, the teeth, and legs: four red—the tongue, the lips, the middle of the cheeks, and the gums: four long—the back, the fingers, the arms, and the legs: four round—the head, the neck, the arms, and the ankles: four wide—the forehead, the eyes, the bosom, and the hips: four delicate—the nose, the eyebrows, the lips, and fingers: four ample—the lower part of the back, the thighs, the calves of the legs, and the knees: four small—the ears, the breasts, the hands, and the feet."

CHAPTER V.'

Evening Prayers—A Supper—Meet a Lion—Kaid Alarby—Robber's Story continued—The Sultan—The Champions—The Death-blow—The Spirit of the Wood.

WHEN the voice of the Mueddin from the tent mosque of the Doowa announced the prayers of Al Mogreb, or Vespers, we took leave of our Arab hostess, and joining Kaid Alarby, wended our way through herds of cattle, flocks of sheep and goats, and troops of horses, that had already arranged themselves instinctively round the tents of their owners, for security during the night. My people were now, like all good Mohamedans, prostrating themselves with their faces turned towards the holy Kaaba; but my honest servant Sharky had, I distinctly observed, at least one eye directed to the kesksoo pot, which was steaming with a hopeful odour, and which for my part, I confess, occupied my whole attention.

During supper the sheikh's son, an intelligent-looking lad of about twelve years, accompanied by Kaid Alarby, paid us a visit; and no sooner had we finished our meal, than I was called upon to make a particular exhibition of our guns, pistols, knives, saddles, &c., which were all to be severally scrutinized; and, as the wonders of Christendom worked upon their fancy, prayers were rapidly muttered in quick succession by all the faithful in my tent against the wiles of Sheetan (Satan), who is held by this simple people to reside within the mechanism of our finest European works, and to regulate their movements.

Such is the ignorance of European art among all classes in this country, that, some years ago, a resident of Tangier having in his possession an astronomical telescope which inverted the objects, and having exhibited it to some Moorish neighbours, it was bruited about that the Nazarene possessed a glass through which he looked at the Moorish women on their terraces, and

that this instrument had the power of turning the ladies upside down! Information was sent to the court, showing the impropriety of Christians being allowed to make use of such magic art; whereupon a mandate was dispatched from the sultan to the governor of Tangier, directing that the importation of such instruments should be strictly prohibited, and that the Nazarene who possessed the telescope should be summoned to deliver it up to the authorities for their examination, and called to account for his shameless proceeding!

In the meantime the Hadj, the Malem Sharky, and the owner of the rat-tailed, whom we had all taken a fancy to, and willingly admitted as one of our party, had managed to dispose beneath their belts of some half-dozen capons, with a full proportion of the most satisfying kesksoo. Kaid Alarby left us now to attend upon another party of travellers, who had just arrived on their way to Tangier; and who proved to be a kaid and his suite, who were conducting a lion and lioness, as an imperial present to the "*Sultan*" of the United States. But our good friend Alarby, being somewhat agitated by deep inquiries into a brandy-bottle which he had discovered in my canteen, reeled his way out of the tent, making its canvas roof rattle over our heads as he stumbled amongst the cords, and welcomed the travellers with his boisterous "Salam oo Alee Koom."

His attachment, however, for myself, or rather for my spirit-bottle, was not yet exhausted; for he had no sooner disposed of the comers and their lions, than he came rolling back, praying loudly for a little more brandy.

"The Hakkem has ordered me," he said, "to superintend your guards carefully; and to keep out the cold from myself whilst I am doing so, I must really have a little more of that Christian medicine."

This I promised to give him, if he would keep strict watch till the morning outside, and leave us to sleep in peace.

"Hark you, guards!" he now shouted; "hear what I, the Kaid Alarby, say: I will destroy the house of your fathers if I find that one single sinner has winked an eye this night!"

Scarcely had he concluded his threat, when we heard his ponderous body stumble over the picket of our mule, by whose side he fell, and slept with her till the dawn, where we then found him.

An hour before sunrise we broke our fast with coffee and kesksoo ; and scarcely had the "henna-fingered Aurora" touched the tops of Gibel Habeeb, when, the tents being already struck and the baggage packed, our little party moved off, having first invoked God's blessing on the Hakkem, and bid good bye to jolly Kaid Alarby, who complained of a racking headache, arising—as he told us—from the anxious watch he had kept all night.

For a traveller in this country the early morning is the time of enjoyment ; his spirits are then the most elastic ; he is refreshed by rest, and braced by the coolness of the balmy air. This delightful feeling can only be estimated by those who have toiled their weary way in a sultry season through a long monotonous tract, within these latitudes.

Having given vent to the overflow of my spirits by a wanton gallop after a hare that started from beneath a palmetto-bush close to our path, I found that our companion of the rat-tailed, with the usual negligence of a Moor, had omitted to secure some of his horse's furniture, and had stopped behind to adjust it. He now came tearing up to me, after his own fashion of Lab-el-barode ; and, in the most received style of compliment, fired his gun close to my head.

Having properly acknowledged this compliment, although I was by no means sure that he had not singed my whiskers, I reminded him of his unfinished tale of the robber, and begged him to continue it. He required no second bidding ; and, after a complimentary flourish or two in honour of my Nazareneship, thus began :—

"Alee slept soundly after the sultan's supper, though he dreamt of blows.

" 'May God prolong the life of our Lord!' " shouted by thousands of prostrate heads, greeted the Kleefa of the Prophet, the champion of God, as he rode under the imperial umbrella * into the Meshwa, a very spacious court of the palace, where the Father of Islam gives public audience. The monarch was mounted on a snow-white stallion, which, with arched crest

* The *D'al*, a very large umbrella, which is in Marocco to this day the ensign of royalty, as it was in very early ages, and still continues to be, in various nations of the East.

and measured steps, moved majestically under his Shereefian burden.

“ ‘All goes smoothly in the world,’ was whispered through the crowd; for thus they interpreted the peaceful colour of the sultan’s steed, which is supposed to indicate his sublime highness’s humour: for you know, O Nazarene! that white is the symbol of peace and good-will; black, that of hatred and war; chestnut, that of displeasure; whilst the shades of brown, grey, roan, cream-coloured, and the rest, are each known to express the various state of the imperial mind.

“ The bridle and head-trappings were superb, being of green silk richly embroidered in gold, whereon was portrayed, easily to be seen by all men, the sacred emblem of Solomon’s seal; and in the hollow of the neck might be remarked now and then, through the thick and silvery mane, a small pouch of scarlet leather, wherein was held a portion of the earth of the holy Drees’s tomb—upon his soul be peace!—and by its side was suspended, in strange conjunction, the polished tooth of some enormous boar—unholy beast! nevertheless an infallible remedy against the evil eye.

“ His saddle, which reposed on a housing of orange damask, was quilted in green, having a poitrel and girths of the stoutest silk, interwoven with gold thread. The ample stirrups were of massive gold, beautifully chased.

“ The sultan’s simple dress formed a striking contrast with the richness of his horse furniture. He wore a caftan of white kerseymere, with the Moorish girdle of white leather, embroidered with pale blue silk, fastened by a plain silver buckle. A muslin turban, with the silk tuft of royalty, crowned his imperial head; and over this hung gracefully, in full broad folds, a transparent haik, of the finest fabric of Fas. His legs were equipped in boots of white Marocco leather, curiously worked with devices in silk thread.

“ The Meshwa herald now proclaimed that *Shasha* (the blow-giver) and the six-fingered Alee, each of free will, were about to test their strength, and that a royal donation of fifty gold mitzakel* would be the reward of the conqueror.

* A mitzakel is equivalent to about 2s. 6d. sterling.

“ ‘ May God bless our Lord ! ’ shouted by ten times ten thousand voices, drowned the cry of the herald,—‘ the deafener,’ as the people called him, from his astounding voice. Both the champions were already on the appointed ground, when there arose the question which should receive the first blow.

“ On this the sturdy Alee spoke:—

“ ‘ O mighty Shasha, slave of the Defender of the Faithful, the sultan of the world ! it is my duty to grant that advantage even to the meanest servant of our Lord.’

“ The Blow-giver replied :

“ ‘ Your course of life is run ; it has reached its goal ! Where shall I deal the fatal blow ? ’

“ Alee pointed to the top of his head.* The long and muscular arm of the black was now raised and poised in the air over the skull of Alee, who, with knees slightly bent, stood undaunted before his antagonist, a broad grin upon his features, as if certain of his power of resisting all human strength.

“ Down came the fist of the black, sounding like the sledgehammer when struck with force against an anvil. Alee staggered, drops of sweat burst out upon his forehead, his eyes rolled with pain, and seemed starting from their sockets ; but recovering, he shook himself, and, rubbing his bullet-shaped head, and looking around, exclaimed : ‘ Allah ! that is what you may call a blow ! And what a blow too ! Allah ! But now comes my turn, O Bokhàry ! and if it please the most mighty God, Shasha the blow-giver shall never deal another.’

“ Then, turning towards the sultan, he craved to be allowed to place himself on equal height with his tall opponent. This was granted ; and four soldiers were ordered to fetch a marble block

* With the poorer classes of this country the heads of boys are all closely shaved from their earliest youth, and left bare to the sun or storm, not covered by either cap or turban, and thus the skulls of the rude Moors acquire a thickness as extraordinary as that which historians affirm to have distinguished the ancient Copts.

The Moorish boys when fighting butt against each other with their heads, and he who falls is sure to have the power of his cranium proved by a stone or brick-bat, if one be at hand ; and often have I heard such cracks resound upon the Moslem pates as would inevitably have fractured the skull of a hat-wearer, and for the tempting wager of one farthing will many of these lads break you a well-burnt brick over his bare pate with more good will than I would crack a biscuit on my own.

that was at hand, but they found it too much for them. Aleé ran to the spot, and, having with their assistance put it on his shoulders, brought it and placed it in front of the sultan.

"Then having doffed his gelab, he took his position on the block, and, clenching his six-fingered fist, and throwing his body slightly backwards, raised his arm, and seemed to choose a posture whereby he might secure the greatest power. He hesitated, and dropped his arm, as if to consider a little longer.

"And now the black man trembled, and over his sooty face there seemed to come a horrid paleness, as Aleé resumed, in a yet more decided manner, his posture of attack.

"Down—rapid as a thunderbolt—fell Aleé's fist, and with it fell the black, never to rise again. The Bokhàry's skull was frightfully fractured, and he who had so often dealt the blows of death, was now but as one of those who had met a like fate from his own relentless arm.

" 'There is no power nor strength but in God,' exclaimed the sultan, as the black expired at his feet. 'Give the clown,' pointing to Aleé, 'the fifty ducats, and let him have safe conduct. Shasha, in truth, is a great loss to my household; but who can avoid God's decrees, which are written in the Book of Fate?'

"Aleé took the purse; and ere the sultan's mandate for him to be escorted could be put in force, he had mingled with the crowd, and was seen no more. Some said that the brethren of the black murdered him that night."

We all applauded this story, which was especially to the taste of the Hadj and Mallam Ahmed.

"And was he," said I, "O eloquent follower of the Prophet! was your thick-skulled hero really slain?"

The owner of the rat-tailed shook his head mysteriously. "Noble Nazarene," he said, "be it known to you, that not many weeks after this blow-giving many daring robberies were reported to have been committed on the highway between Tangier and Tetuan, near Ain Jdeeda (the New Spring), a spot marked by many a small whitened cairn as a field of blood; also on the hill of Dar-el-Clow, over which we travelled yesterday; and in the woods of Sahel near Laraiche, and in the great forest of Mamòra. No idea could ever be formed as to the number of

the gang, but it was supposed to be numerous, for well-armed *kafas** had shared the same fate as single passengers: and what was the most mysterious, the robbers had never been seen, although some suspected that the marks of cloven feet† in the wild districts where the robberies were committed were those of the marauders.

“Near to the most difficult passes, and from out the darkest and densest thickets, would a deep sepulchral voice threaten the travellers; and the words ‘Halt, or you die!’ would be heard as uttered close at hand. Should no heed be taken of this command, or should any attempt be made to discover the speaker, as sure as there is another world, a shot would lay low some one of the party. Search or pursuit for these mysterious highwaymen was useless, and often proved the death of many a stout heart. The *kafas* and other travellers, finding no resource but to obey this call, came by common consent into a practice of stopping when thus summoned, and according to the demand they deposited on the ground food, clothes, money, or anything which they were commanded to place there by the unseen one, who never failed to accompany his requisition with some dreadful threat if an attempt were made to discover him, or if they delayed making the best of their way off after they had paid the toll.

“Schemes were planned, and ambushes laid for trapping these unknown outlaws, for no one could suppose that the public were the victims of a single robber; but the evil spirit, as the folks firmly believed, thwarted all such attempts, for it seemed the peaceful travellers’ enemy had strange foreknowledge of every plot against him, and the fool-hardy adventurers who attempted his capture seldom returned to tell their tale.”

* The term used in Maròcco for an assemblage of merchants and others travelling with goods, called in the East a *karwán*, or vulgarly *caravan*.

† A belief in the fabled satyrs of old Rome yet lingers in the fancy of the people of West Barbary.

CHAPTER VI.

Locusts—Story of the Robber continued—The Taleb—Horrid tale of Murder—The *Fathá*—The Schoolmaster—The Meeting—Alee's opinions—The Pass-word—Rahmana—The Capture—Alee in love—The Marriage—The Traitor—The Proclamation.

HE of the "rat-tailed" had proceeded thus far when my Spanish friend, who had very little knowledge of the Arabic, and had for a considerable time been groaning in the spirit at the length of the narrative, interrupted him somewhat abruptly, by calling my attention to a dense mass of locusts which were busy at their work of destruction in a field of maize near our path, and which Don Jose said appeared to him to be of the same species as those which of late years had infested the plains of La Mancha, and which the Spaniards had in vain endeavoured to destroy.

We had before met with several species of these insects, called by the Arabs Jerad, but only in small quantities; and indeed it is seldom that the northern provinces of Marocco are visited by them in such numbers as materially to injure the vegetation.

On one occasion, however, I myself witnessed their ravages in the neighbourhood of Tangier, and can truly say, in the words of the Old Testament, "They covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened, and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left, and there remained not any green thing in the trees or in the herbs of the field." *

At the period to which I refer, the locust first appeared near Tangier in the winged form, and did not commit much injury, but settling along the sea-coast, deposited their eggs and died. Some months afterwards, in July, if I remember rightly, the grub first appeared, and was about the size of what is commonly called the lion-ant. A price had been set by several European

* Exodus x. 15.

residents at Tangier upon each pound of eggs that was brought by the natives, and many thousand pounds' weight by this means were destroyed, but, apparently, it was of no avail; it was but the drop of water from the ocean; for soon the whole face of the country around was blackened by columns of these voracious insects; and as they marched on in their desolating track, neither the loftiest barriers, nor water, nor fire, daunted them. Quenching with their numbers the hottest fire, the rear of the dreadful columns passed over the devoted bodies of those who had preceded them. Across ditches, streams, or rivers, it was the same. On, on they marched, and as the foremost ranks of the advanced columns were drowned, their bodies formed the raft for those that followed; and where there seemed most resistance to their progress, thither did the destructive insect appear to swarm in the greatest numbers.

One European resident at Tangier, the Consul-General for Sweden, who possessed a beautiful garden in the neighbourhood, abounding with the choicest flowers and shrubs of Europe and Africa, waged for a long time successful war against them. His large garden had the advantage of a high wall, and outside this barrier he had stationed labourers, hired for the purpose of destroying the invading columns. Often did the Moslems shake their heads, and, predicting sooner or later the destruction of his garden, exclaim against the wickedness and folly of the Nazarene in attempting to avert the decrees of fate. At one time it had been hoped that this beautiful spot, a favourite resort of the Europeans, had been saved, for, whilst all around had been rendered bare and desolate, the garden yet rejoiced in a luxuriance of vegetation.

But the day soon came in which the Moslems' predictions were to be fulfilled. The locusts, ceasing to be crawling grubs, put forth their wings, and took flight. Myriads and myriads, attracted by the freshness, alighted on this oasis of the desert, and in a few hours every green blade disappeared, the very bark of the fruit-trees being gnawed in such a manner as to render them incapable of producing fruit the ensuing year.

At length, a favourable wind having arisen, the locusts took flight from around Tangier, and the sky was darkened by their countless hosts. Vast numbers of them were driven into the

sea, as shoals of their putrid bodies washed back upon the coast proved to us. It not unfrequently happens that the stench of the dead bodies of this insect causes very bad contagious fevers.

The female locusts, when full of eggs, become an article of food with the Moors. They are boiled in salt water in the same manner as shrimps, which they resemble in taste, but it requires some resolution at first to get the monster into your mouth. When in the grub state they are greedily devoured by the wild boar, jackal, fox, and other wild animals, and on taking wing they are attacked by storks, hawks, and almost all the feathered tribe.

In the present instance, the amount of mischief which we noticed was comparatively small, yet it was sufficient to give an appearance of singular desolation to the space over which it extended, and to lead my Spanish friend to expatiate upon the subject. Having, however, concluded his entomological disquisitions, the Don very graciously intimated to the story-teller that he might resume his narrative. Off at once set the Arab, nothing loth.

“It was at this time, O Nazarene gentleman! when such reports were abroad, that there happened to be travelling over the hill of Dar-el-Clow an aged Taleb* on his return from the village of E'Mzòra† to his native place near Tangier. As the old priest reached the ‘vale of murders,’ he goaded on his mule into a hurried amble, being somewhat cheered at seeing a party of muleteers about a mile before him, who had already gained the summit of the hill, and whom he now anxiously strove to join, for his memory was full of what he had heard when reposing the night before with another traveller in the mosque-hut of E'Mzòra; and the horrid tale which now depressed his spirit shall be told you, as we travel on, that you Nazarenes may know of what the Western Saracens are capable under the tempting influence of gold and silver.

* A Taleb is the name given in Marocco to a public scribe or notary; and, as religious and civil law with Mohamedans is one and the same thing, the Taleb is priest as well as scribe.

† Close to the village of E'Mzòra is the site of an heliacal temple, whereof, among numerous remains now prostrate, one stone, called vulgarly by the Moors Al Ootsed, or “the peg,” stands yet erect, and is of such large dimensions that it would not discredit the stupendous structure on Salisbury Plain.

“ This was the tale to which the venerable Taleb had listened in fear and trembling :—

“ Two Hebrew pedlars, who had made some little gain by selling gewgaws to the Arab women, were trudging back to Tangier, when they were assaulted in a woody spot of the Taleb’s present track by an armed mountaineer. To offer resistance to a Moslem is the last thought that ever occurs to infidel Jews, so opening quickly the little bag of bontquees,* they instantly swallowed the gold.

“ The robber searched them, but was disappointed of his prize ; but he soon suspected where they had hidden the gains which he well knew they had made in the neighbouring encampments. The poor Jews, trembling, protested their poverty, and kissed the feet of the highwayman, craving his mercy ; when the merciless ruffian took advantage of their position, and stabbed his suppliants to the heart, and, ripping them up, snatched his bloody booty from their entrails.

“ ‘ Stop, or I shoot,’ grated on the old man’s ear as he was pondering on this fearful story. He quickly reined in his mule, and groaned out ‘ May God have mercy on me ! ’ ‘ Your prayer is heard, O Moostafa the learned,’ said the same hollow voice ; ‘ leave your beast and come hither.’ The Taleb dismounted, his teeth chattering as he tottered towards the mysterious speaker, who now, in the sing-song tone used by the Mohamedans while reciting the Koran, began to repeat the *Fatha*, or first chapter of the holy book.

“ ‘ Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures, the most merciful, the King of the day of judgment ; thee do we worship, and of thee do we implore assistance ; direct us in the —’

“ ‘ I never could get further,’ said the unseen speaker, ‘ and I remember the time, venerable father, when your long stick, that now, I see, serves as your support, would have been rapped sharply over my *six fingers*.’

“ ‘ God is great ! ’ exclaimed the Taleb : ‘ What ! is it Alee the six-fingered ? O Alee ! Alee ! thou wouldst not have come to this, if God had willed you should remember his holy words.’ Then raising up his staff, as the old pedagogue would have done

* Small gold pieces equal in value to about eight shillings each.

had he been safe within his school, he prompted the *quondam* pupil, his ruling passion for teaching conquering all his fears.

“ ‘ Direct us in the right way,—say that, Alee,—in the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious, who walk uprightly, not of those against whom thou art incensed, nor of those who go astray.— But where art thou, my son, or is it thy spirit that speaketh? for I heard the Bokhàry killed thee in the month of Doolhedja last.’ ”

“ Alee, who had been well concealed in the hollow trunk of a large and ancient cork-tree, startled the old schoolmaster by his sudden appearance, and, taking hold of the hem of his garment, kissed it reverently.

“ ‘ O my son,’ said the Taleb, ‘ I grievously fear thy sins will be on my head! Return with me to Bendeesham and your friends! Still there is hope, for has not the Prophet written— If ye turn aside from the grievous sins which ye are forbidden to commit, we will cleanse you from your faults, and will introduce you into Paradise with an honourable entry? ’ ”

“ Alee, starting from his knees, exclaimed, ‘ Does the lion, to whom God has given strength above all beasts, does he content himself with a sheep while the herd of oxen are within his grasp? Why, then, should I live in misery and slavery, since the Ruler of nature has given me the strength and activity of a lion? Whence,’ he continued, in an indignant tone which made the old man tremble, ‘ whence do sultans and their soldiery— those human falcons—derive their right of preying on the weak? Thinkest thou that I and thousands of bearded men kissed the dust, the other day, in the Meshwa, before him who claims the title of Meer al Moomenin (Prince of Believers), from good will and affection?—No! nor is it from such motive that you and your brethren pay into his coffers your scanty gains! What cause have I for abandoning my mode of subsisting in this world, or for fearing punishment in the next, whilst the defender of your faith breaks the Prophet’s law by rapine and extortion, and yet lives at ease in his conscience, so long as he has the power to do wrong with impunity? I am not more of a freebooter than he is; only I practise on a much smaller scale.. My edict is— Stand, or I fire! My prime minister is my good gun and an unerring aim.

“ ‘Hark! I hear the distant tread of camels; come, old man; this night thou shalt be the guest of the Spirit of the Woods;’ and he laughed wildly. ‘Mount your mule, and I will lead the way.’

“ The old man, fearing to refuse, followed the outlaw. They scrambled their way through thickest copses, trespassing on the very lair of the lynx, the jackal, and the boar, who, roused, retreated grumbling, after their fashion, at such strange intrusion.

“ The Taleb thought that the way they went looked like one where human feet had never trod before, and so it was most probably, for Alee had avoided detection by never travelling twice over the same path.

“ The old schoolmaster began to feel himself very uneasy as, muttering the word Allah! Allah! a hundred times, he followed his extraordinary conductor, grievously fearing that but little good would come to himself or his mule. At length they reached a jungle of briers, apparently impassable; and Taleb Moostafa said, with a trembling voice, ‘It seems to me, my son, that you have missed the track.’

“ Alee made no answer, but having first bent down, as if to examine the ground, uttered a sound like the bleating of a kid, which was soon answered by a shrill whistle, that made the old man’s heart sink within him, and put a bridle on his tongue.

“ ‘All is right,’ said Alee, going to a spot where the jungle seemed the thickest; then listening a while, he threw back a wicket of the living brier, made in such a manner as not to be detected even by a hunter’s observing eye. This they passed through, and then the briers were cautiously replaced. Winding along a narrow path cut through the thicket, they came upon an open space, through which ran a clear stream. On its bank the outlaw had formed a hut, but so thatched as to be with difficulty distinguished from the surrounding thicket foliage.

“ As they entered, a young woman in a loose dress ran forward to meet and embrace the outlaw.

“ ‘Well, Rahmana, I have not been able to keep my promise to bring the bracelets and handkerchiefs; for just as the kafia was coming up, our venerable uncle here made his appearance on the highway, and I could not let my good old schoolmaster

pass our dwelling without a welcome; so, my dear Rahmana, you must make ready some savoury dish out of the flesh of the wild cow * I shot yesterday; for I think our guest must be very hungry. As he spoke he turned round to the old man, who had sat down with his back turned to the fair partner of his wild pupil.

“ ‘Come, Seedy Moostafa,’ said Alee, ‘the Spirit of the Woods is not jealous of his Houri. Why is woman made lovely, but to be looked upon? and what were our eyes given us for by the All-wise, but to behold beautiful things? Rahmana, go, ask the Taleb’s blessing, and then prepare the kesksou.’”

“To hear was to obey with old Moostafa upon the present occasion; so raising the hood of his white geelab, he looked upon Rahmana; who bent to kiss his hand, and having received a blessing, left him in order to prepare the meal.

“ ‘This damsel is truly beautiful—blessed be God!—and seems happy with you in this wild scene: may I ask you, my son, how came she here?’”

“Alee took out a small cane carved in Arabic; then jerking out on the hollow between his thumb and forefinger a long snuff of Tetuan tobacco, offered it to the Taleb: and looking at him, steadfastly replied: ‘For my wife I paid no dowry; yet I hold her dearer, ay, dearer, I dare say, than the Kaid of Alcassar can prize either of his four, though for one of them alone he gave a dower of a thousand *Mitzakel*. Now, hear how I brought my fair one to her bridegroom’s home.

“ ‘Having one morning taken up my position on a high rock that gave a wide command of view, I remained perched, like the eagle, watching for my prey; when a party of travellers appeared slowly winding up the hill. The principal persons were preceded by their baggage-animals with their drivers; behind these rode on an ambling mule a venerable man, whose dress bespoke some wealthy Fas merchant; and by his side, on a stout pony, rode, after the fashion of a man, a female closely muffled up.

“ ‘I descended cautiously from the height; then taking my

* Within a very few years wild cattle abounded in the woods of Boomar; they were of a dun colour, had very long horns, and were of lighter frame than the tame cattle. When wounded they were very dangerous. The last of these wild animals was, I understand, killed about four years ago.

stand by a fountain near the highway, waited with a cocked gun the travellers' approach.

“ ‘I had already taken sure aim at one of the muleteers, who having a brace of pistols slung over his geelab, might, I thought, prove my most troublesome opponent.

“ ‘As the party reached the fountain, the old man dismounted from his mule, then helped his female companion to alight, whose beauty, which you have so deservedly admired, I then first beheld ; for as she dismounted, her haik caught in the stirrup, which drew it from her grasp, and unveiled the hallowed features. From that moment I resolved she should be mine, and, God willing, without bloodshed.

“ ‘The old man having seated her at the verge of the wood, in the shade, ordered the muleteers to push on with the baggage-animals towards Tangier, and said that he would rejoin them with his daughter as soon as he had performed his ablution and prostration ; for the shortened shadow told it was about mid-day, and the hour of prayer. I now felt convinced my prize would be easily won, for the protector of the fair was too infirm to offer resistance, yet still I waited my best opportunity.

“ ‘The old man, having performed sundry ablutions at the fountain, took from his saddle-bags a fine Fas rug, on which, having spread it east and west, he began his adoration ; but finding, I suppose, the surface [of the ground in that spot too rough for his aged limbs, he moved to a level plot of turf some fifty yards down the hill, and there in perfect comfort recommenced his genuflections.’

“ ‘God forbid,’ said old Moostafa, ‘that at such a moment thou shouldst have wronged him.’

“ ‘It was God’s will,’ continued the robber : ‘but listen.

“ ‘Leaving my gun against a tree, I crept cautiously through the thicket, until I reached its border, where sat Rahmana closely wrapped in her haik. I was about to carry my purpose into execution, when the clatter of horses’ hoofs was heard fast ascending the hill, and obliged me again to retreat into the bushes. The new comers proved to be a body of cavalry escorting prisoners, whose hands and feet were strongly bound in chains. The party halted at the fountain for a little time to refresh their horses ; and then moved quickly on again. The old man was yet at prayers,

though I could perceive he was about to conclude them. Scarcely were the horsemen out of sight, when I crept again with noiseless step towards the damsel. Her back was turned : I took off my slippers, and crawling upon hands and feet, cautiously approached close to her : then giving a glance at the old man, whose forehead was pressed to the ground, I pounced on my prey, and pressing the haik over her mouth, I lifted her in my arms, and dashed into the forest, regaining my gun as I passed the tree.

“ ‘The poor girl was sadly frightened, and endeavoured to give the alarm to her aged parent ; but he could not have heard her stifled screams. I brought her to this hut, and loosening the veil, gazed on her features. A death-like paleness had come over them, and her eyes were closed. I shuddered as I thought that Azrael, the arch-robber of mankind, had snatched her from me. A gentle heaving of the bosom told me, however, that her fate was not yet written. She looked so pale and sorrow-stricken, that for a moment I almost resolved to restore her to her father ; but then, I reflected that a worse lot might befall her than to be the wife of one who already loved her so fervently as I did ; for perhaps, reasoned I, she is destined to become one of a numerous harem of some old dolt in Tangier ;—and this,’ said the Arab, interrupting himself, ‘was just the case.

“ ‘I bathed,’ continued Alee, ‘her forehead with cool water from this clear stream : she opened her eyes, but shrunk back on beholding me, and cried out, “O father, save me ;” and then again she closed her long eyelashes, studded with liquid diamonds. Long, long, it was that she remained disconsolate. She would take no food all the day and night, and I watched her almost insensible form. On the morning I again endeavoured to soothe her, but the only words she uttered were, “Where is my father ?” I swore to her by my beard that he was unharmed, at the same time declaring my passion for her, and that I was her slave. Still she rejected food. I continued to watch her with the tenderest care, and vowed never to sleep or eat till she became assured I meant her no harm.

“ ‘At length hunger obliged her to taste something ; and then, poor girl, after many days, she took courage to converse with me. She told me who she was, and that her father, in spite of all her entreaties, had resolved to have married her to the old

administrator of customs in Tangier, a husband aged enough to remember the first plague.—But now,' said the robber, 'we are husband and wife, and only wish for your blessing and a written contract to be as happy a pair as the doves, *God's proclaimers*,* that are wooing over our heads.'

" 'That shall be granted,' said the old Taleb; 'but, my good Alee, what became of her father?'

" 'Why,' said Alee, 'I little know; though, in truth, I heard one of a party of travellers, while sitting under the tree, the very tree from which I carried off Rahmana, relate that a beautiful girl of Fas had been carried off from her father, and that the old man was persuaded it was the *Jin* of the Woods; for although at prayers within a few paces of her, he had seen nothing, and had heard nothing.'

"The next morning before break of day Alee conducted his guest through the forest to the high road, and on taking leave presented him with thirty mitzaket, and cloth of the finest texture sufficient to make a soolliam, which would have done honour to a kady. But, O noble Christian, the old man, as I shall now relate, was little worthy the confidence and bounty of his former pupil.

"Not many days succeeding this strange adventure of Taleb Moostafa with the Spirit of the Woods, a message was dispatched by the Kaid of Tangier to the court, which was then in Marocco, giving full particulars of the abode and person of the secret evil-doer, declaring that he who had carried off the merchant's daughter was no other than the six-fingered Alee. On that very day a considerable number of horsemen were ordered to scour the wood of Dar A'clon;† but they did so without success. They had penetrated even to the very cave where the scene took place which I have just described, where the yet smouldering embers and other recent vestiges showed that the strange inhabitant had received as true information of their intention as they of his abode.

"Daring robberies were now committed day after day in the Forest of Maucora, about three days' journey from Alee's late

* An epithet given to the dove by the Moors, from the motion they make when cooing being similar to that of the prostrations of a Moslem at prayer.

† Meaning the House of "Clon," a famous robber in former days. The house no longer exists, but there is to be seen at the top of the hill a cave, whither robbers yet resort occasionally.

retreat. A party of Arabs had laid in wait for Alee, and succeeded in wounding him ; but, as usual, Alee escaped, sending three of their number to rejoice the hearts of the Houris in Paradise.

“ A proclamation was issued by the sultan, and sent to all governors of provinces and towns, to all kaid and sheikhs of this western empire, ordering them to use all diligence to take alive or to kill Alee the six-fingered, the plague and torment of the universe. All were obedient to the Shereefian edict, yet still the outlaw kept the country in alarm. Wealthy travellers and rich-laden kafas took redoubled precaution against the formidable Alee, whose rapid movements made many people believe that he had a charmed life, and could be in ten places at one time.

“ Alee, however, wisely kept friends with the country folk, and the poor especially, often enriching them at rich men’s cost : it was indeed strongly suspected that the people of many camps and hamlets had connived with him ; nay, that they even were associated with him in more than one of his forays.”

CHAPTER VII.

Story of Robber continued—The Sheikh's Mare—The Message—the Reward—Alee keeps his word—The Dog's Bribe—Description of the Mare—Shot at a Pigeon, but killed a Crow—War not against the Devil—The Siege—The Ambuscade—Roast Pork—The Failure—The Flight.

“WHILST the sultan was contriving Alee's destruction, the robber's famous horse, on which he had often escaped from justice, died from over-exertion, after saving his master's life while hotly pursued by a troop of cavalry. Now there was an Arab sheikh who governed a camp in the neighbourhood of Alcassar, and who, amongst much rare and precious property, possessed a mare of marvellous powers. Her swiftness was that of the east wind, and by the most true God, I swear, she was a thoroughbred deafener.* Her dam, it was said, had surpassed in beauty and speed all the horses in the world. Her sire, it was firmly believed, was the famous stallion of the sea, called Moha al Bahr.† No sooner did Alee—now without a horse—hear of the famous mare, than he coveted this most precious of the rich sheikh's goods, and vowed that he would have her by fair means or by foul.

“It happened that, in one of his marauding expeditions, a follower of this very sheikh fell into the hands of Alee. A free passage was promised to this man, on condition of his carrying faithfully a message to his master, touching the mare. This message was couched in extremely polite, but rather decisive terms; to the effect that, at an appointed time and place, he, the sheikh, would be pleased to send the mare; adding that this was suggested to save both the sheikh and himself much trouble, and, it might be, some bloodshed; for, were not the mare sent as directed, he should forthwith take her by force, and no power,

* The Moors' epithet for a horse that deafens the rider by the speed with which it rushes through the air.

† There is a Moorish legend telling of such an animal on the coast of Arabia, where it is supposed the finest Arabs are bred.

if so it pleased God, should hinder him. He then dismissed the man unharmed, but with a dreadful threat of vengeance, if he did not fulfil his mission faithfully.

“The poor envoy soon found cause to rue his having undertaken this office; for on presenting himself to the sheikh, and delivering Alee’s message, he was ordered to receive instantly one hundred stripes of the dreadful filaly* for his barefaced impudence. This was all the attention shown to the robber’s demand and threat. Well indeed might the haughty sheikh regard it lightly, for this mare of all mares was picketed every night in front of his own tent, and in the centre of the dooar, around which prowled packs of hungry dogs, watchful as the moon, and who, with little provocation, would make a meal of any stranger who trespassed on their domain after dusk.

“It was on a dreary day in the month of January, while fierce wind and torrents of rain raged from the heavens, that a man in the dress of a courier, his hooded geelab tucked up and girded round his loins, his feet clothed in a pair of stout sandals, a small dagger stuck in his girdle, and a palmetto basket slung over his shoulder for a budget, was seen making hasty way on the high road to Alcassar Kibeer, and not till between the *Mood Aloolee* and the *Sebbah* † did he deviate from the main track and take the direction of a camp of the *Oolad Ensair*, ‡ thence some half-hour’s distance. The gloomy eve turned to a black night, while a sea of the heaviest rain fell pelting from above.

“The disguised courier, for it was none other than Alee himself, halted as he neared the camp, and finding all quiet, except now and then the howl of a dog, he planned his approach; and now on hands and feet advanced cautiously towards the pen where the sheep were kept, in the eye of the wind, for fear the hungry hounds should sniff him. Snatching a ‘father of wool’ § out of the pen, he squeezed him in his grasp, and retraced his steps some fifty yards; then drawing his dagger, sacrificed the mutton in the name of God, and making a prayer for his success, proceeded to cut up the carcass into some fifty bits.

“Taking these in the skirts of his geelab, he moved on some

* The usual Moorish scourge, so called as being made of strips of Tafielt leather.

† Between two and five o’clock in the morning.

‡ The sons of eagles.

§ *About Souf*, or a sheep.

few yards and listened: all was quiet. Then he imitated the barking cry of a jackal; and the well-known sound was responded to by several of the village pack. He repeated it, and two or three fierce hounds rushed towards him. He threw them a bone: growling and fighting ensued, which soon attracted the whole pack of ill-fed dogs. Delicious morsels—sufficient to bribe and to satisfy the hungry maws of all comers—were thrown to them: and henceforward the enemy required no watchword with which to enter the unguarded camp. So, taking a bridle he had stowed away in his basket for the purpose, and grasping his dagger, he walked boldly to the sheikh's abode of felicity.

“There stood the prize—black as the night, but her eye gleamed like a star! There she stood inviting her ravisher. Her figure was like”—(and the narrator paused, as if at a loss for a comparison)—“picture to yourself, O Nazarene, an animal yet more beautiful, more lively, than my steed, and you have it. She snorted and reared, but Aleé was quicker than the heels of a thorough-bred, for planting his vice-like hand on her nostrils, he donned the bridle, cut the pickets, and now vaulted on her back.

“‘Most generous sheikh,’ cried the ‘six-fingered.’ Nobody answered, ‘O possessor of fine horses! O Sheikh Hamon!’

“‘What’s the matter, and who is there?’ said a gruff voice from within the tent.

“‘God give you a prosperous morning, Sheikh Hamon,’ said Aleé: ‘I have kept my word and come for the mare; may the All-bountiful send you a better.’ No sooner said he these words, than he darted off full gallop into darkness.

“Sheikh Hamon, with cocked gun, rushed to the rescue, and caught a glimpse of a black figure making off at full speed. ‘Devils and demons,’ cried he in despair, ‘she shall die rather than be another man’s.’ He fired, and down fell his object. A wild laugh echoed at a distance. The sheikh rushed towards the fallen object: all the villagers were up in arms—‘Seize him, Mohamed—Bind him, Salem—Bring him dead or alive, Mustafa,’ cried the frantic sheikh: ‘if I have killed my —— (and he could not for grief utter the name of his mare) my loss is irretrievable; but I have done a service to the sultan and the world.’

“The forms of half-naked Arabs, with torches, guns, and

daggers, gleamed all around, and now they rushed towards the fallen mass, and a shout of surprise and yet of gladness was given as they discovered that the angry passion of their chief had been vented on one of his finest black bulls, the plague of the village, for many persons had been gored of late; and as they were ignorant of Aleé's apparition, they all supposed it had met with its well-deserved fate for having attacked their chief when returning from his matins. They dragged the carcass before the sheikh's tent, who, on beholding his victim, plucked his beard in fury, then hung his head, and with solemn voice exclaimed—'War not against the devil—God's will be done,' and returned into his tent.

"The loss of the mare, and the extraordinary conduct of the sheikh, were not known in the village until next day.—Aleé rode that mare till the day of his death.

" 'Though he possess the charm of Abd-Errachman, the Soosy—though he be in league with the dark One himself—this day shall he render account to Him who is the Almighty Judge of crime!' Thus spoke a doughty kaid, who, armed to the teeth, and mounted on a prancing horse, was accompanied by some fifty followers, all in warlike trim.

" 'Look,' said the kaid to his kleefta (lieutenant), as they reached a dark and lonely ravine in the wood of Boamar—'look at these gouts of blood, which—still as crimson as on the day poor Sheikh Selim, the bearded, was here villainously murdered—call for the vengeance of all who would fight in the path of righteousness. Here let us then arrange our plans, and swear not to abandon our task till we have fulfilled the mandates of our lord the sultan; and let every man take the precaution of adding a silver okeea* to the ball, for thus alone can be broken the charm of the malicious one.'

" 'The Fatha†—let the Fatha be said,' they all with one voice exclaimed; and Taleb Abd-el-Kader, a military moolah,‡ with hands uplifted, gabbled over the sacred words:

" 'Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures, the most merciful, the King of the day of judgment. Thee do we worship,

* A piece of money worth about 3*d.* sterling.

† 1st chapter of the Koran, used as a prayer.

‡ Priest.

and of thee do we implore assistance. Direct us in the right way ; in the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious, who walk uprightly : not of those against whom thou art incensed, nor of those who go astray.'

"The stronghold of the besieged freebooter was a wood, about two miles long, by half a mile in breadth ; impenetrable in many parts from the thick briers and close-set bushes. To attempt to beard the robber in his den was considered too hazardous a deed : it was therefore determined to set fire to the wood, in the quarter whence the wind was blowing, and to lay wait for the fugitive on the opposite side. Thus they felt assured that, between fire and sword, they were certain to destroy him. Kaid Mohktar now proceeded to station his men, in companies of six, at all the outlets of the wood ; then taking with him a few chosen men, he rode round to the opposite side to commence the work of destruction.

"Some dried leaves and branches having been collected, a light was struck, and the conflagration commenced. At first a small column of smoke curled up in the air : it was soon followed by a volume of flame towering to the height of the tallest trees, and withering with its great heat every green bush, ere it reduced it to dust and charcoal. The fire strided on : and what was lately an impenetrable thicket became a waste of smoking ashes.

"The kaid, with his attendants, continued busy firing the wood, wherever the wind would favour the progress of the flame. Success seemed to attend the stratagem ; and all were waiting, though not without fear, to discover which outlet the terrible, and until now unvanquished, Alee would choose for his sally.

"Then it was that a flame rose suddenly from the very centre of the wood, at a spot some three hundred yards distant from the advancing fire. It blazed, it crackled, and rolled on with a headlong vigour of destruction ; and at intervals was heard the rending crash of some giant tree, that had for ages braved all the other elements, but now lowered its noble head.

" 'Who,' cried the Kaid in wild despair, 'who but this accursed fiend would have thought of such a scheme ? See ! he has fired the wood in the centre, and when all around shall be burnt, he will choose his point of escape.'

"To prevent this, the Kaid had now to change his plan ; and

posted his men all round the wood in parties of three. They had commenced their attack early in the morning; it was now about noon. The fire they had first kindled had just reached the yet smoking embers of the conflagration in the centre, and that, in its turn, had carried its ravages to the opposite border. One small path still remained green; all around was a mass of flame and smoke. The Kaid had stationed himself in a watercourse with three men. Birds and animals were flying with terror all around, heedless of man's presence; and ever and anon a frantic boar would gallop down the watercourse.

" 'Allah!' said one of the party, as an 'abou snau'* passed with bristles half singed from his back, and smoking from the fire; 'if he tastes as well as he smells, I could make up my mind to sell myself to the devil and dine on his carcass. God forgive me for saying so!'

" 'Hush!' said the Kaid in a low voice; 'he comes; and, O merciful God, he comes our way! Be steady and resolute.'

" A mounted figure could now be seen moving rapidly over the burning embers. His pace increased as he neared the ambushade; and the slight figure of a female, her garments blackened with the fire and smoke, and her long hair streaming in the breeze, was clinging to the waist of the robber. Mounted on a jet-black steed, that, with blood-red extended nostril and foaming mouth, bounded as a deer over the huge rocks, Alee, with levelled gun, dashed straight towards the party. The Kaid had now made sure aim, and, raising a shout to bring together the line of valiants posted along the wood, was about to pull the trigger, when a deadly shot brought him a corpse to the ground. His three attendants stood firm, waiting with levelled guns their adversary's nearer approach, to give him a warm reception, and avenge the death of their chief.

" Alee in an instant had given the gun to Rahmana, and, drawing his sword, now flew like lightning on his opponents. The black mare, as if she knew her owner's danger, redoubled her speed; and in an instant the robber was on them, and received their fire unhurt. Man after man rolled on the ground: all fell who came within his reach, whilst he eluded every blow of his enemies.

* *Abou Snau*, 'father of tusks.'

“The whole body of troops had now approached. The balls flew thickly ; but, still unharmed, the hero and his well-beloved pursued their course. Nay, some declared that the balls were heard to rebound from his body back upon his assailants ; and it must have been so, for there was a second man of the party killed by a shot-wound besides the kaid—upon whose soul be mercy !

“Alee having distanced his pursuers, slackened his pace ; he sheathed his sword, and reloaded his gun. One horseman yet pursued him boldly. Alee descended a steep ravine, and, turning close round the side of the opposite hill, reined in the mare. The well-mounted pursuer was not many yards in his rear. Alee waited him, and soon, with drawn sword and shouts of vengeance, he turned the corner.

“‘Fire !’ cried Rahmana, ‘or we are lost !’

“‘Let him come,’ said her husband ; and as the enemy approached, Alee recognised in him one of the Bokhàry blacks who had vowed vengeance on him the day of his feat at Marocco in presence of the sultan.

“‘Join the Blow-giver !’ shouted Alee, as he shot him through the brains.

“‘And now,’ said he to his wife, ‘jump up into my saddle, while I mount yon horse of the swarthy black, which seems to be a good one. Hark ! the troops are again in pursuit of us. On—on ! for we must ride till the morrow dawns on us in the wood of Sahel.’

“Next morning the fugitive and his wife were safe in their little tent of camel’s hair in the Sahel, unmolested and undiscovered ; and the body of cavalry returned, brow-beaten, to Tangier, to tell a dreadful tale of wonders.

“Alee, with a keen eye, scrutinized the path and bushes ; and, following the fibre of aloe with which he had encircled their abode, found it unbroken except in the path they had entered. His stock of food, which he had left there since his last visit, was also safe.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Continuation of Journey—The Hyæna—Alarby the Silent—The Race—Moorish justice—The *Jins*—The Wig—The Magician—The owner of the “rat-tailed” resumes his story—The marriage of Jilaly—The Offering—Alee is seized—His Escape—The Pursuit—A sad Scene—The Burial—Interruption of our Story—Alee a Mourner—Sanctuary violated—Imprisonment—Sentence—Torture—Death and Burial—Executions in Marocco.

At no part of our journey had the scenery been more pleasing than at that where we now arrived. It was the entrance of the wood of Sahel, formed of cork-tree, oak, wild-pear, and locust-tree, with underwood of furze, tamarisk, and myrtle. Protected by the thick foliage from the scorching rays of the sun, we travelled on pleasantly for several hours. The Mallem had taken the lead, and now conducted us through the thicket by a narrow path, which our loaded animals had some difficulty in threading. It was marked with tracks of wild animals, among which I was told those of the hyæna, and sometimes of the panther, might be recognised by the huntsman’s eye.

I have often been amused by the difference of tone in which the Arab sportsmen express themselves when speaking of the different animals of chace. When they talk of the lion, it is always as if they considered him a particularly gentlemanly personage; and they treat panthers and boars civilly enough. But their contempt of the cowardice and stupidity of the hyæna has no limit; indeed its Arabic name, “dbaa,” means addle-headed or stupid.

On the present occasion the Hadj was very severe upon them.

“The dull-witted knaves,” he said, “fancy that if they can hide their head in a hole, all the rest of their body will be invisible; and be assured, O Nazarene! that the Arab huntsmen are not slow to take advantage of their folly. I remember,” continued the Hadj, “accompanying a friend of mine to a cavern which he had marked down as the abode of one of these

rapscallions. We took with us no other weapons than our daggers and a long rope. Having reached the mouth of the cavern, which was situated in a thicket, my companion, stooping down, peered within; and could perceive the hyæna nestled in a corner, with its head thrust into a cavity of the rock. Turning to me, he said—and he took care to speak loud enough for the beast to hear him—‘Did you say that the hyæna was here? You must be mistaken, for he is not here now. O no! they call him a stupid fellow; but he is no fool: if he was, he would be here.’ Then, entering the mouth of the cavern with his eye upon the beast, my companion continued: ‘O what folly to suppose the hyæna would be here! It is quite light; I can see everything; but the dbaa, poor fellow, he is gone. O no, he is not such a fool as we call him!’ Then, cautiously approaching the animal, with his dagger in one hand and the rope in the other, talking loud all the time, ‘Yes, yes,’ he said, ‘it would be very different with me if the hyæna was here. He is a brave fellow; he is not afraid of two men,—no, nor of a dozen. He is a clever fellow, though men do abuse him.’ Then suddenly he slipped a noose of the rope round his hind-legs, and shouted to me, ‘Pull away! pull away! He is here, the rascal, the coward, the fool! Pull, pull away!’ So the hyæna was drawn out of the cave, and we dispatched him with our daggers.”

The Hadj said, that even when the hyæna is ensconced in a hole with his head towards the huntsmen, they frequently thrust a bone towards him, which the stupid beast will seize hold of with his teeth; and the huntsmen, taking advantage of his gripe, drag him out, and then dispatch him by the blow of a club, or with a stone.

During the time the Hadj was giving us this anecdote, we had become more entangled in the thicket. Every now and then, my knees encountering the thorny furze, or when closely embraced by a fond bramble, I grumbled angry words against the Mallem for having left the beaten track; on which our hardy guide, to my further discomfort, quickened his pace, promising that we should soon arrive at a large village, and resume the wider and more easy road. After another half-hour’s scrambling we came suddenly upon the promised village, which was

situated in a fine valley abounding with many a cool and refreshing spring.

"Here lives," said the Hadj, "*Old Alarby Sooktsee* (Alarby the Silent), from whom, you must remember, son of the English, you purchased your favourite horse."

"Never shall I forget old Alarby," I replied; "but we have not time to stop, or I would send for the old breeder of horses. Often has he begged that I would give back his child, as he calls my favourite Arab."

This Alarby was a curious fellow, enthusiastic in his attachment to horses; and so redundantly eloquent in their praise, that why he was denominated "the silent" was always a mystery to me.

On going into our stables a month or two ago with a friend, a young Frenchman, to show him my pet, we found the old fellow kissing *Arab's* forehead with great affection. The sagacious animal pricked up his ears, and evidently recognised his former master.

"God be blessed!" said Alarby; "he remembers me—the darling! And I could tell my own horse among a thousand: I knew him by his silken coat, his graceful form, his beautiful little head."

And the old fellow's eyes glistened, and he chuckled, as he said, "I knew him! I knew him!"

My friend was not a little amused at this burst of tenderness in a horse-dealer; and drew him out, nothing loath, into a long rhodomontade history of myself and my horse, or rather of my horse and myself; which, as characteristic of Arab feeling, I will give as nearly as I can in the very words he used.

"Hear, O Christian!" said old Alarby the Silent, and, though safe from all eaves-dropping, he spoke at first in a whisper; but, by degrees, as his energy increased, he became loud and vehement,—“hear the feats of my horse, and how, when mounted upon him, the son of the English encountered the Arab tribes:—It was when the Fekée Abd Eslam Eslowy first came to Tangier that there was born to him a son by his favourite slave; and the tribes of Ib-dowa and Tleg-el-Kholot, mustering some thousand horsemen, came down to this city, protected of the Lord, to congratulate Seedy—our master—upon the event, and

present their offerings. On the eve of their arrival the two tribes assembled upon the sea-shore, to indulge in *Lab-el-barode*; and O, such chargers! such gazelles! Praised be God for his bounty to men, as it was displayed by those matchless horses upon that happy day! The hills were crowded with the men of Tangier, and of all the country round; and from every crack in the old town-wall peered the lovely wives of the Faithful, through their muffled haiks, encouraging the hearts of all around by their shrill yells of joy.

“And now the men of Ib-dowy charged in bodies of two and three score; and Salem the Swarthy would be seen in the race standing on his head; then followed the Tleeg and Kholot. And, as they galloped, each horseman, standing in his saddle, would shift steeds with his neighbour, discharging their guns as they reached the goal. It was a sight to have rejoiced even the dwellers in Paradise!

“Well, Christian, be it known to you that during the sport I observed a Frank join the spectators. He was mounted on an iron-grey, and his horse, moving with arched crest and uplifted tail, seemed barely to touch the ground. I looked again, and I said within my heart, ‘That horse is my breeding, or no man’s!’ In another moment I knew him to be mine; for I recognised the purchaser of my horse, the son of the English, as he turned his head towards me.

“Many were the taunts the Christian received from the Arabs as they passed on returning from the charge. They laughed at his saddle and bridle, and called upon him to join in their charges, if he dared. This he refused, saying he had no gun, and that he preferred being a spectator.

“Now I drew nigh to where he had taken his stand, and I overheard one of the Tleeg, who had reined in his beautiful black charger, in order to scrutinize more closely the young Christian’s accoutrements, say, ‘Is not this the haughty Nazarene, who, as he passed by our tents last spring, boasted that he possessed a horse that no horse had ever beaten in the course? And now, like a true infidel, he has not the courage to acknowledge his false words, or to put his sorry jade to the trial.’

“To this he who now stands by your side replied, ‘An Englishman never eats his words. I still back my horse against the

field ; but let a proper time be chosen. If I were now to show your tribe the heels of my horse, I know that I should be insulted. Name another day, or at a later hour on this, when the multitude have left the shore, and you shall witness whether the Nazarene, with his Frank saddle and bridle, cannot put his steed into the charge.'

" 'Your hand,' said the Tleeg ; ' the challenge is accepted.'

" Towards the close of the evening, when the cavalry and the spectators also were moving off, the owner of the black made a sign to the Christian, who was soon at his side. Some of those who yet remained saw this ; and soon the rumour spread, even to those who had left the ground, that a Frank was about to race with a Tleeg.

" The whole body of cavalry now moved back together, and with them thousands of spectators. In the meantime the son of the English rode up to the starting-point ; and I saw the Sheikh of the Tleeg dispatch five other picked horsemen to join in the race. I could perceive at the distance that my own horse, my darling little one, was placed in the middle. I trembled all over with anxiety. I, a Moslem, wished the Christian to be victorious ; but how could it be otherwise, when the child of my bosom was with him ?

" The distance was some six hundred paces. Off the racers started ; and for the first hundred yards all were neck and neck. The people shouted, and then followed a dead silence. My darling had shot in front, and so had the black. Another shout was raised—the black was in front of all ! I bit my lips, and, hiding my face, cursed within myself the Nazarene for his bad horsemanship. But the shouting ceased ; I looked up again : the iron-grey was foremost ! I shouted aloud, and soon the frowns of all around were upon me. O, how I wished to cry out, That horse is my breeding ! But I dared not for my life.

" My child won the race, and an angry murmur ran through the crowd. But the Sheikh believed that the black had won, and, riding up to the Christian, said tauntingly, ' Who gained the race, O rebeller against God ?'

" ' Saw you not, O Sheikh of fine horses,' replied your friend, ' that I was left behind ? and see you not that my front is covered with sand ?'

“The owner of the black horse, boiling with rage at having lost the race, while a stream of blood trickled from the sides of his charger, now interfered: ‘This Nazarene,’ he said, ‘has beat us in nothing but his arrogance; and may God burn the grandfather of the man who sold him the horse he rides!’

“Turning to the Tleeg, the Christian said, ‘Did I not warn you and all your brethren who had ridiculed me, that I should throw dust in your faces? God has willed that my horse should gain: why this ill-blood? I cannot be called arrogant; on the contrary, my countrymen might more justly accuse me of having degraded myself in joining thus with a soldier-rabble.’

“‘Silence!’ said the Sheikh; ‘know you not that it is an honour for a Christian to compete with the basest Mahomedan? Do you think yourself, O infidel, on a par with any one of these?’

“‘If I disbelieved in God,’ replied the Nazarene, ‘I might own your superiority; but, as a Christian and an Englishman, I yield to no man.’

“‘What!’ cried the Sheikh, and a dark scowl came over his face, as he brought his horse close upon his; ‘darest thou, O rebellious one, hold such language? Perhaps thou pretendest to be *my* equal?’

“‘In truth,’ replied the young Christian, ‘I do; and, as an Englishman, I am your superior.’

“Putting his hand to the hilt of his sword, the Sheikh dared him to repeat it.

“‘I care not for your threats,’ he answered; ‘and I will repeat every word that I have said.’

“The Sheikh’s sword was out in an instant, and waved over the Christian’s head; and several of the Tleeg discharged their guns at him, singeing his garments; and had it not been that my horse lashed with his heels at all around, and that a party of Reefians rushed among the cavalry to his rescue, the Tleeg would have been revenged.

“The blessing of the Prophet on the iron-grey, the lovely one! and a blessing upon all his ancestors!” exclaimed old Alarby the Silent, as a wind-up to his story, which, barring a little exaggeration, was a tolerably correct account of a scrape I had got into, which, if it had not been for the opportune inter-

ference of my friends among the hunters, might have ended rather unpleasantly. But a good many of my old companions in the chace were on the ground; and, although I was a Christian, they gallantly stood forward to defend me.

The affair will not soon be forgotten among the Tleeg; for when I complained of the insult to the Basha, he took up the business in a much more serious manner than I expected. He asked me what reparation I required. I replied, that as I felt that the fault was partly mine, for having exposed myself amongst the wild troops, all I demanded was an apology from the Sheikh, to be made to me in the presence of all the tribe.

“‘That,” said the Basha, “would indeed be letting these outlaws off too easily. Shall I burn their habitations? Some severe example must be made, or you Christians will be no longer safe.”

I besought the Fekée not to proceed to such extremities.

“Well,” said he, “at your request I will be lenient.”

Then, turning to his Kleefa, he said, “Let the Sheikh and a dozen of his followers be put in prison, and not be freed until a fine of two hundred mitzakel be paid. Let the Sheikh’s flocks and cattle be driven into Laraiche; and let it be made known to the tribe that such is the punishment of the lawless.”

In vain I petitioned against such severity; the commands were forthwith obeyed. I suspect that the Basha had long wished to squeeze the wealthy tribe of Tleeg, and rejoiced at the occasion.—But to return to our journey.

A camel led through a country town in England could not have excited more curiosity and astonishment than the appearance of my Spanish friend and myself in the wild village through which we were passing. At each door stood whole families gaping with amazement; whilst the younger children shrunk in terror at beholding such strange apparitions. One youth, bolder than the rest, having approached our party, demanded of the Hadj what kind of beings we were. The Hadj, with a grave face, replied that we were *Jins*, or evil spirits, which he had caught and was conducting to Laraiche, to be shipped for the land of the Nazarene. Upon which the lad fled howling to his hut.

I remember poor Davidson mentioning to me the general be-

lief he had found prevalent amongst the Arabs in those parts of the Levant which travellers seldom frequent, that the Frank is in league with devils, witches, and unearthly beings. He told me that, on more than one occasion, he had profited by such fancies, when his life had been in danger from the wild tribes among whom he had ventured. Davidson was bald, and wore at that time a toupet. A body of Arabs, having surrounded him, had commenced plundering his effects, and threatened even his life; when suddenly Davidson, calling upon them to beware how they provoked the Christian's power, dashed his false hair to the ground, saying, "Behold my locks; your beards shall go next!" The Arabs fled, abandoning their plunder.

On another occasion, when making some astronomical observations, he was so inconveniently pressed upon by a crowd of insolent Arabs, that he found it impossible to continue his operations; so, turning to them, he said, "O fools, seek ye destruction? Know the power of the Nazarene!" Then, beckoning one of the elders to approach, he told him to look through the sextant, whilst he, slowly moving the index, informed the barbarian that he would behold the sun to leave its course and approach the earth. The Arab, pale with fright, after a momentary glance, threw himself on the ground and begged for mercy, beseeching Davidson that he would forthwith leave their land, and take compassion upon their herds and crops, upon which he felt convinced that the Nazarene had the power to inflict murrain and blight.

"We must soon part, my friend," said I, turning to the rider of the rat-tailed: "I pray thee continue thy story, and let us hear what next befell your hero, the Six-fingered."

"O Christian," said he, "I have little more to say. It was in this wood we left Aleë when I broke off my story—here, on this very track, it was that the traveller, when hastening on his journey, was often startled by the well-known summons of 'Stop, or I fire!'

"Aleë, as I told you, never molested the poor. Wealthy caravans or porsy traders were the sufferers; but his robberies were bloodless, unless he met with resistance or disobedience. He was, indeed, on such good terms with the villagers in whose neighbourhood he carried on his depredations, that he is said to have been daily provided with an abundance of *mòna*, to which

each village contributed a portion; and in return, when there happened to be a marriage-feast, Alee would sometimes appear, and, bringing a gift for the bridegroom, would assist at the rejoicings.

“ Now Sheikh Biteewy, of the village of ———, had made known, by the public crier, that his eldest son, Jilaly, was to take unto him for wife Fatma, the daughter of Kaid Etsiftsy.

“ These were joyful news for the Six-fingered, who loved a carousal, and was fond to excess of *somets*.^{*} So, having laid in the necessary store of provision for his wife, he promised to return to her after three days; for Rahmana was expecting soon to become a mother.

“ Alee then selected from the spoils of a wealthy Israelite, who had lately fallen into his clutches, a handsome piece of brocade and a pair of massive gold anklets; and having wrapped them up in a fine silk handkerchief, of Fas manufacture, he set out towards the thatched dwelling, of the sheikh about the Mogareb.†

“ The sheikh was sitting at his porch when Alee approached: he welcomed him kindly, and very graciously accepted his offerings.

“ Alee, as I said, was fond of *somets*, and never had he been accused of passing the wooden bowl without taking a long and hearty pull. That night his potations were more deep and frequent than usual; and at length, overcome by the intoxicating fumes, the freebooter lay senseless on the floor.

“ ‘What sum has been offered for this drunkard?’ said old Kador, the one-eyed, who, by-the-bye, had frequently handed the bowl to Alee (near to whom he had seated himself). ‘They say,’ he continued, ‘that our lord the Sultan would give the dower of a Basha’s daughter for the bullet-head of that villain. Are we to disregard the royal mandate? Are we to admit into our feasts one whose very hand is stained with the blood of our kindred? Did he not shoot my uncle’s wife’s brother, Kaid Moktar, while obeying the orders of Seeyedona?‡ Are we to

* An intoxicating drink, being boiled juice of grape, which is distributed to the guests at the merry-makings of mountaineers in this country.

† The hour of evening prayer.

‡ Epithet for the Sultan, meaning “our Lord.”

accept gifts bought at the price of blood? Are we, in the face of God and man, to be a party to his lawless acts? Let others do as they please; but I,' said he, unsheathing his dagger at the same time, 'I will not be a traitor to my Sultan.' Heated with wine, and excited by the appeal of the One-eyed, several of the guests started up, applauding his decision. 'But,' said they, 'let us not take his life, and bring ill-luck upon the bride and bridegroom; rather let us secure his person, and send him in chains to the Prince of Believers.'

"Now, knowing the immense strength of Alee, and his luck in escaping from the hands of justice, they agreed, in order to prevent any failure in their attempt, that two of the party should be ready with loaded guns to shoot him if he made the slightest resistance.

"It was some moments before Alee discovered their treachery, for the fumes of somets had addled his brains: resistance too was useless, so he suffered himself to be bound hand and foot.

"Having effected this, the villagers called a consultation, and agreed that three armed men should be left to watch him for the night. Old Kador again interposed, saying, 'O fools! ye know not with whom you have to deal: this is not a thief of the Shloh: this is not a cattle-stealer of Benimsooar. This is the Six-fingered: ay, this is he for whom three hundred mitzaket have been offered. If you will listen, I will tell you how to secure him.'

" 'Speak then, O Kador,' they cried.

"Upon which the One-eyed said, 'Let the skin of his feet be torn from the soles; and then, if he break his bonds, he will not have power to go far.'

"The savage proposition was put into execution. Alee groaned with agony; and called upon those around for mercy. To many of them he had performed acts of kindness: but they had gone too far to retract, and were deaf to his entreaties.

"This done, the three guards were left to watch their bleeding prisoner, who lay groaning with pain, the acuteness of which had quite recovered him from his drunken fit.

"The night rolled on; and the guards, tired of watching, drowsy from the effects of wine, and trusting to the crippled state of the robber, gave way to sleep: even old Kador, who

was one of their number, and the most watchful, thought he might venture to snatch an hour of rest.

“On hearing the snoring of the guards, the hope of escape flashed through the mind of Alee: but how to break his bonds—for one or two efforts told him that even with his enormous strength the thick palmetto cord was not to be conquered.

“Now, he remembered, there was a large flat slab of stone in the centre of the hut, upon which the bowl of *somets* had been placed, and the sides of which had been finely cut: so, creeping towards it, he patiently rubbed the cord against the sharp edge of the stone, until he had completely sawn through it, and his hands became free.

“With a little dagger, which he cautiously removed from the belt of one of the sleepers, he cut the cords that bound his feet: then tearing off part of his turban, and creeping towards the glimmering lamp, dipped the rags in the oil, and bound his mutilated feet. ‘Now,’ muttered he, ‘I escape or die—but first let me have revenge!’ So, crawling towards the old Kador, the cause of all his present suffering, he suddenly placed his iron fist on the mouth of the old man, and with the other hand plunged the dagger into his perfidious heart.

“‘Enough of blood,’ said he, as he wiped his dagger: then taking some loaves of bread in the hood of his *jelabea*, for he reflected that in his state it would require many a long day to reach his home, he crawled noiselessly out of the hut.

“All was quiet without—both dogs and men were alike overcome with the plentiful bounty of the sheikh: so, stealing along snake-like through the village, he descended towards the river, which at some half-mile from thence ran its rapid course towards the sea.

“‘If,’ cried Alee, ‘God grant that I may reach the water, then I yet may see my wife. Alas! alas! What will become of Rahmana? This day ought I to be in Sahel Forest.’

“The red tint of dawn had just risen from the east, when loud cries of men and dogs resounded through the village. Alee heard them, and his heart sunk within him: but the river was now only distant some fifty yards; he soon reached it, and having quaffed a copious draught, he plunged into the stream, laying flat on his back, and allowing the rapid current to carry him whither it listed.

“The voices of his pursuers now approached, the baying of the dogs was heard nearer and nearer, and torches gleamed in every direction. Some of the villagers were mounted, others on foot; and all were armed with such weapons as had first come to hand, when their prisoner’s escape had been announced.

“‘He cannot be far off,’ said the foremost, ‘for here are the traces of his knees; ’tis lucky his feet are useless, for the devil would not catch him were they sound.’

“‘And here is blood too,’ said the son of old Kador the One-eyed—who, furious at his father’s murder, swore to kill Alee with his own hand, though he himself had been one of the slumbering guards whom the freebooter had in mercy spared.

“‘By this track,’ said another, ‘he has clambered down the bank. See the marks of his cursed six fingers.’

“‘There is no God but God!’ exclaimed a third: ‘I will swear he is concealed among the oleanders. Hie, Zeitoon,’ he said to his dog, who was giving tongue, hot on the tracks of blood.

“They now descended the bank, and found marks of their fugitive, down to the water’s edge.

“‘He has passed the river!’ was shouted out by many a voice, and then both men and horses dashed across the rapid stream. But no trace on the opposite bank could be found. They scoured the country all around—still they were at fault. ‘He has paid the penalty of his crimes,’ exclaimed one of them, ‘and has been drowned while attempting to cross the river. May God have mercy on his soul!’ and the party returned to the village.

“Alee, having floated a long way down the stream, and hearing nothing further of his pursuers, made for the shore, and lay some hours in the wet reeds, weak from loss of blood, excitement, and fatigue.

“During this time, however, he had dressed his wounds with the herb called Tserbil,* which grows in marshy ground, and which he had fortunately found near the water’s edge, and its cooling qualities tended much to relieve his aching feet. As the evening set in, he again started on his painful journey, crawling on his knees and hands—which, after a few miles of such

* A kind of sage.

travelling, were reduced to almost as wretched a state as his mutilated feet—and he was again obliged to seek a hiding-place, until he could recover strength and heart to continue his journey.

“ Thus did he labour on for five long days; and had it not been for the scraps of bread taken from the hut of the sheikh, he would have died of hunger. On the morning of the sixth day he reached his own hut. A horrid stillness prevailed; and a cold chill came over him, as with a trembling voice he called upon his wife: but no answer was returned. Alas, where was she who used to welcome the robber with tears of gladness? Again he called with a louder voice, ‘ Rahmana, where are you?’ No reply gladdened his ear. Gasping for breath he entered the hut, and there lay the corpse of his poor wife, and on her cold bosom an infant dying from want of nourishment.

“ ‘ Thy curse, O God, is on me,’ he cried, ‘ and well have I deserved it! But why, O cruel fate, was I not permitted once again to see my wife while yet alive, and ask her forgiveness? And my poor child too—alas! alas!’

“ Alee passed a long, long night of agony, bemoaning his cruel lot; upbraiding himself bitterly for the intemperance which had caused all this misery; and bathing with tears the remains of his beloved wife and child.

“ The next day he peeled the bark from the trunk of a young cork-tree, and made a coffin for the bodies of his wife and child; vowing to bury them by the tomb of his patron saint,* in the wood of Sahel, as soon as his wounded feet would permit him to undertake the laborious task.”

Notwithstanding the interest we all took in the fate of poor Alee, I could not help interrupting my friend the Arab, by asking him what was the employment of several ragged-looking mortals, who, half naked, were carrying large bundles through the wood. He told me they had been collecting bark, which had lately become an object of commerce at the port of La-raiche.

When we came up to these wretched specimens of humanity, they greeted me with the old rhyming malediction of “ *Eusara*

* It is the custom of the Mahomedans to bury their dead near to the site where a saint has been interred.

fee senara, Lehood fee sefood" (the Christian to the hook, the Jew to the spit); upon which our escort, the valiant Mallem, was about to resent the insult, and, putting his Rozinante to the charge, would willingly have belaboured them with the long thong of his bridle (the horsewhip of Marocco), had not I checked his *generous* rage, to which he then gave vent in the following tirade:—"O naked scurvy dogs! O reptiles of the slime of the earth! Cover your shame and put a bridle to your tongues; look at these Nazarenes, God's own creatures, and reflect whether they or you are best fitted for the hook."

The Arab now continued his story. "Three weeks," he said, "had passed, and Alee's feet were much recovered; so, placing the bier upon his shoulders, and taking with him a fas,* he took his way to the sanctuary, which was a good six miles from his solitary abode; and there he buried the remains of her whom he had loved so dearly; and then he took an oath, over the fresh-dug grave, to abandon the life of a robber, and to visit daily, until death, the tomb of his lamented Rahmana. Being no longer provided with mōna by his friends, who all supposed him dead, and bound by oath not to commit violence, poor Alee subsisted on acorns, or such roots of the forest as he could procure; or else, crouching by the road-side with muffled face, begged bread, for the love of God, from the passers-by.

"Rumours now got abroad that a figure like that of the famous robber had often been seen sitting near the sanctuary of the Sahel wood; and orders came down from the court to the Kaid of Laraiche to inquire into the truth of these reports; and should Alee, the Six-fingered, be yet alive, and found to frequent the sanctuary, that he must be seized, and that even the sanctuary itself might be violated, should he take refuge there.

"It was Friday; Alee had taken a branch of myrtle, and was seated over the grave of his wife, speaking to her, after the Moorish fashion, as if yet alive. Wrapped in his thoughts, he did not perceive, until they were nigh upon him, some score of men, who now emerged from the wood, armed with guns. Alee was unarmed, for thus he always approached the holy ground: he had left his mare some way off in the wood, and his feet were not yet so much recovered as to be trusted to in flight: moreover he was tired of life, and cared not what became of himself;

* A large Moorish hoe.

so, walking leisurely towards the holy sepulchre, he entered therein.

“The soldiers now surrounded the sanctuary: it is a small coned building, within which is a framework of carved wood that covers the spot where the bones of the saint are laid.

“The orders were to bring the Six-fingered alive; so they agreed to surround the building, but not to commit any violence, unless Alee attempted to escape. Much discussion, however, ensued as to who should venture within to arrest the formidable culprit. At length three of the stoutest hearted agreed to undertake the bold adventure.

“Alee was sitting coiled up in a corner, his head bent to his knees, and his hands buried in the folds of his geelab.

“With fear and trembling the three armed men advanced a step; when Alee, raising his head and fixing his eagle eye on the foremost man, seized a huge stone, one of many which lay scattered in the tomb, and hurled it at his breast. The man fell, and the two others made off, but one of them, as he reached the threshold, was levelled by a second missile from the all-powerful hand of Alee.

“‘And now,’ exclaimed the Six-fingered, as he approached the door, ‘no man shall lay hands on me within the sanctuary near to which my wife is laid; but I am sick of life, as all I cared for lies in yonder grave: so fear not,’ said he to the Kaid of the troop, every man of which, with levelled gun, was expecting further mischief; ‘take me prisoner, and convey me whithersoever you please.’

“He was now bound without offering resistance, and led out of the burial-ground.

“‘*Aj Aj Mesòda*’ (come here, *Mesòda*), cried the robber, as he reached the wood; and a moment afterwards a black mare, saddled and bridled, came neighing towards the party. The soldiers tried to catch her; but she reared and kicked, allowing no one to approach her. ‘You had better leave *Mesòda* to me,’ said the Six-fingered. The soldiers desisted from their endeavours to catch her, and the mare quietly approached her master. Alee now slipped the bridle from her head, kissed her face, and, giving her a light blow, cried ‘*Awa! Awa!*’ and the mare, who seemed to understand his wishes, made off at full gallop into the wood.

“ ‘Go,’ cried he, ‘O pupil of my eye; no man shall ever possess you but in death! and thus indeed it would have been with thy master, had he not lost his mate.’

“Alee was taken prisoner to Laraiche, where the greater part of the population came forth to see the dreaded highwayman, and, as he passed, the curses of the many were showered on his doomed head, but they were intermingled with the blessings of not a few who recognised in him a former benefactor. Fetters were now riveted on his hands and feet, and a massive iron collar, with a chain that would have held a lion, was fastened round his neck. Thus secured, he was taken before the governor of the place, who ordered him to be lodged in a dungeon.

“The sultan, having been apprised of the robber’s arrest, issued a royal letter, declaring him an outlaw, and condemning him to lose the right hand and the right foot; that then he should be released, and allowed to limp about as a moral lesson for others of like character.

“On the day appointed for the execution of this dreadful sentence, Alee was led forth to the market-place, where crowds of people had assembled from all the country around to witness the fate of him who had been the cause of such terror to this western world.

“The executioner was ready with his knife, and near at hand was placed a bowl of hot pitch, wherein the stumps were to be thrust to stop the bleeding. His manacles, as I have told you, had been riveted on, and a blacksmith was about to be summoned to break them off, when Alee exclaimed, ‘Is it for these toys you require a blacksmith?’ and, jerking back his hands, he snapped them asunder.

“His right hand was now seized by the executioner, who, with three other men, endeavoured to force it from the socket previous to cutting it off at its joint. ‘Why do you tremble?’ said Alee to the executioner; ‘give me the knife, and I will do what you dare not. Fear not that I shall use the knife against you: my doom is sealed; and had I so wished, I would have escaped long ago.’ The knife was given to him, and, the four men pulling at his hand, he with his left hand severed it with one cut, and plunged the bleeding stump into the boiling pitch without a groan. His foot was then amputated by the executioner, and then the poor wretch was abandoned to his fate.

“Two days after, Alee Boofrahee, the Champion, the Six-fingered, was found dead, lying on the grave of Rahmana. He is said to have expired raving mad, and was buried by some charitable persons near to the body of his wife.

“May God have mercy on their souls!” said the Arab, and ended the tale.

It may be here remarked, that notwithstanding the tyrannical laws of this country, capital punishments are very rare; and, during the last ten years, three only have taken place in the town of Tangier. On one of those occasions I was unintentionally present.

I had risen at break of day, and, accompanied by a friend, had set out to shoot near the town, in ignorance of the execution which was about to take place. On reaching the principal gate of the town, we found it shut, which surprised us much, knowing old Ben Khajjr, the porter, to be an early riser. We then proceeded to the castle gate, called Bab Marshen, which was also shut, but Ben Khajjr was there, with a multitude of people, who, like ourselves, were desirous to leave the town.

“Why are you so late to-day?” said I to the old porter. Ben Khajjr replied in enigmas; he had his orders not to let any Mussulmen pass outside the gate for the next half-hour.

“Surely,” I said, “your instructions do not extend to us. If there has been a robbery in the town—to which alone I can attribute this unusual order—we are not likely to be the persons.”

“Well,” said the old gatekeeper, as I slipped into his hand a small silver key, “you and your friend may pass, but no Moor can.”

We sallied forth, wondering what could be the cause of such a novel order. This, however, was soon explained; for the first object that caught our eye was a party of soldiers moving slowly down the road adjoining the old ditch on the south-western side of the town wall.

As we hastened towards the party, we perceived they had two prisoners, who were secured with ropes fastened round their arms and waist. I recognised one of them to be a native of Reef, who had formerly been a gardener in the service of one of my friends at Tangier. He was a fine, tall, handsome youth, and his countenance was far from indicating anything vicious and depraved.

Having joined them, I inquired of the kaid of the soldiers what was the cause of these men being led as prisoners.

"The Sultan—may God prolong his life!" said he, "has ordered that their heads be cut off; they have been carrying on a contraband trade in oxen on the coast of Reef with the infidel Spaniard."

"This, indeed," I replied, "is a severe punishment for such a crime: and if it be intended as a warning to others, why prevent the people of Tangier from witnessing it?"

"Reason not with me, Nazarene," said the kaid; "I have my orders, and shall soon obey them."

The Jewish slaughter-ground had been selected as the spot for the execution. There we found a depraved-looking Moor dressed as a butcher, holding in his hand a small knife about half a foot long. This man, we were informed, was the executioner; he was a stranger, and had been hired to act on this occasion; for the Mahomedan butchers of Tangier, who are the persons constrained to perform such service when a regular executioner cannot be found, had taken refuge in the sanctuary of Mesmoody; and had it not been for this person offering his services, the authorities would have been much perplexed how to obey the mandate of the sultan; though the commander of the troops, when informed by the governor of the difficulty, drew his sword, and exclaimed, "Let the criminals be brought to me, and I shall always be found ready to execute the orders of the Prince of Believers, be they what they may."

A morbid curiosity chained me to the spot, although I foresaw that I should have to witness a most horrid scene.

Some wrangling now ensued between the kaid's soldiers and the executioner as to the reward which the latter was to receive for decapitating the poor wretches; who, all the time, were standing by, compelled to listen to this bartering for their blood. The butcher insisted that four dollars had been offered him for one head alone, and that he must have a second four for the other. The kaid unwillingly yielded the point, and immediately the first victim, who was already half dead with terror, was thrown down on the ground by the executioner, who, kneeling on his breast, put the knife to his throat. I turned away, a violent struggle ensued, and I heard the executioner say, "Give me another knife; mine won't cut." I looked round; the wretched man was

lying with his throat half cut, his breast heaving, and every limb writhing! My companion now loudly reproached the party for their cold-blooded atrocity, and called upon them to put the suffering man out of his misery. After a time another knife was handed by a soldier to the executioner, and the head was severed.

The soldiers shouted feebly "May God prolong the life of our Sultan!" though I observed that many of them were as much horrified as ourselves.

I remained riveted on the spot, where yet another victim awaited his fate. This was the fine-looking fellow of whom I have spoken: again there took place a bartering for his blood; the kaid denying his late promise, and declaring that he would not give even the four dollars unless the head of the second criminal was cut off. To this the executioner was at length forced to consent. The culprit now begged to be untied. This request being acceded to, he took off his geelab, and giving it to the soldier who had performed this last act of kindness towards him, said "Accept this; we shall yet meet in another world." His turban he threw to another, who had uttered a word of pity, instead of joining in the insulting shout of the soldiery; and walking steadily to the spot where his companion lay, he cried out with a distinct voice, "There is no God but God, and Mahomed is his prophet." Then turning to the executioner, he loosened his girdle, and gave it to him, saying, "For the love of God, sever my head with better dispatch than you did that of my brother." He laid himself flat on the ground, yet moist with blood; and the knee of the ruffian, for so he deserved to be called, was placed on the Reefian's breast. A horseman was now seen galloping towards the party.

"A reprieve!" shouted my friend. "Stop! stop!" The executioner withheld his knife.

"It is only the son of the governor," exclaimed a soldier; "he is coming to see the execution. Wait for him."

I rushed away in horror; and soon afterwards we saw the soldiers bearing in their hands the two bleeding heads.

As we felt no desire to continue our walk, we waited with the soldiers till the gates were opened. A fresh dispute took place between them and the executioner, who demanded protection from the populace, which the soldiers refused to give, unless he

gave them two dollars, the half of his earnings. This the butcher refused to do, and he was left to his fate.

No sooner had the gates been opened than a troop of boys had rushed out and attacked the executioner with stones. The man fled into the country, pursued by the young mob, and it was reported that he had fallen senseless some three miles from the town, covered with a hundred bruises.

On entering the town the soldiers seized the first Jew they met, and obliged him to salt the heads, which were subsequently hung from the top of a square tower on the town wall, fronting the great market-place.

As I returned homeward I met in the little sokh a Reefian, whom I knew to be a cousin of the deceased gardener, armed with a brace of pistols and a dagger, hurrying along. On asking him what was the matter, he replied, "I am about to revenge the death of my relation on that cursed stranger, who alone was found ready to cause our blood to flow."

Next day there was a report that the executioner had been shot, and buried on the spot. No inquiry appeared to have been made by the authorities at Tangier, for the cousin returned, and remained unmolested.

After three days' exposure, the heads were sent to the Sultan, to convince his imperial majesty that his orders had been obeyed: they were met on the road by a courier bringing a reprieve, who was said to have been detained in consequence of one of the rivers having been swollen from heavy rains.

Another instance of capital punishment was attended with the following singular circumstances. A Moor of the village of Sharf had shot with a pistol in the market at Tangier a fellow-villager, whom he suspected of being too intimate with his wife. The brother of the murdered man set out immediately for Meknas, where the Sultan was then residing, and claimed the life of the murderer. The Sultan heard the case, acknowledged the justice of the demand, and summoning the plaintiff into his presence, delivered the following curious decision:—

"We grant you our permission to take the life of the murderer of your brother with the same instrument of death with which he was assassinated, and on the same spot, and at the same hour of the day. But," added the Sultan, "why seekest

thou also to be a manslayer? Accept the price of blood, which is lawful unto true believers, and we will guarantee you its payment from our Shereefian hands, and two hundred mitzakeel shall be the sum."

To this the plaintiff replied, "Can that sum purchase me a brother?"

"Go thy way," said the Sultan; "we have heard and understood: a letter will be given you by the vizier, in which our mandate shall be written."

Furnished with the sentence of death, the man returned to Tangier, and presented it to the governor.

On the same day of the week, and at the same hour, the murderer was brought out of prison, and seated on the very spot where he had taken his fellow-villager's life, while crowds of people attended to witness his death.

The pistol was now given to the brother of the murdered man: when, having loaded it, he went up to the criminal, walked slowly in a circle round him, and said, "In the presence of God and man, I call upon you to answer me truly. Didst thou slay my brother?"

To this the criminal replied, "I did."

One of the multitude, now stepping forward, addressed the brother of the murdered man: "Accept the price of blood," said he, "and I promise you one hundred ducats in addition, which those here assembled will gladly give."

"Worthless words," said the villager; and again he walked round his victim. Again he asked him the same question, and again the same reply was given. A second offer was now made, of two hundred ducats; and again the villager, walking round the criminal, repeated his question, adding, "Say what thou believest; I am about to take thy life."

"That God is God, and Mahomed is the prophet of God!" responded the criminal.

Hardly were these words out of his mouth, when the pistol was discharged. It had been placed at the small of his back, being the same spot where he had shot the man for whom he was now about to die; but the wretched criminal, although mortally wounded, did not expire for some hours.

CHAPTER IX.

River Al Kous—Moorish Squadron—Sallee Rovers—Maniacs—Ferry—Laraiche—The Palacio—Basha's Message—The Market-place—Story of the Clockmaker—Scarcity of Provisions—Snake-Charmers—Jewish Fanaticism—A Hebrew Bride—Legend of the Sea and Gnats.

ERE the owner of the "rat-tailed" had concluded his story of Alee Boofrahee, our party had emerged from the wood of Sahel, and before us stood the town of Laraiche; its meandering river Al Kous lay below in its curious coils, like a glassy serpent lurking in the valley.

Having traversed a sandy and sterile soil for above three miles, we descended to that part of the river where the imperial squadron lay in ordinary; and less than *ordinary* they were, consisting in all of a corvette, two brigs, once merchant-vessels, which had been bought of the Christians, and a schooner, with some few gun-boats; and all of them, I was assured by sailors, were unfit for sea. Anchors, sails, and ropes were lying in a state of decay along the bank of the river. Such was the sorry remnant of the naval force of Marocco, whose Sallee rovers used to keep in constant alarm the peaceful merchantmen of Christendom. The terror they once inspired would appear not yet to have lost all its influence upon some maritime states, although the spirit and the power of those rovers are utterly defunct; for two nations, famed deservedly for their sea-kings of the north, and possessing gallant navies, continue, through some curious policy, or out of veneration, it may be, for olden custom, to pay annually a large and disgraceful tribute to the Moorish potentate, as if he were still the formidable toll-keeper of the Herculean straits.

Shortly after we had passed the sultan's arsenal, we were met by a disgusting but not unfrequent spectacle in Marocco; it was a sainted maniac, naked as on the day of his birth, except a party-coloured sackcloth, which covered his shoulders and back; his hair was long and matted, and his beard extended to the middle of his breast; in his hand he carried a short spear orna-

mented with plates of brass and bits of red cloth. On approaching him our attendants dismounted, and bowing their heads, seized his hand and kissed it. My turn came next: and as I did not like to come to such close quarters, I threw him a small piece of money; upon which the poor creature jabbered some few words of thanks, and then stalking up to me with all the dignity of a basha, and an air of condescending patronage, seized the collar of my coat and spat upon my eyes. I knew enough of the habits of the people to be aware that this was a high compliment, but I could not restrain myself from making a wry face upon the occasion; and I was pulling out my handkerchief to wipe off the filth, when the Mallem cried out, "O blessed Nazarene, what God has given let not man efface. Thou shalt be happy! Seedy Momoh, the inspired, has spat upon thee. Thou shalt be happy!" There is no use running in the teeth of superstition, so the holy spittle dried on my face.

The madman or idiot is universally looked upon in West Barbary as a person to be held in reverence. The Moor tells you that God has retained their reason in heaven, whilst their body is on earth; and that when madmen or idiots speak, their reason is for the time permitted to return to them, and that their words should be treasured up as those of inspired persons. These wretched people are allowed to parade the streets in a state of nudity, and the maniacs sometimes prove most dangerous to unwary Europeans. A French consul-general some years ago was nearly killed by a sainted madman, and in 1830 I had a very narrow escape for my life from another.

I happened to be walking on the sea-shore with my sister immediately below the walls of the town of Tangier, when I espied above us a wild-looking fellow about seventy or eighty yards off, with a clotted head of hair that bespoke a sainted madman, aiming at me with his long gun, which he had rested on the wall. We were near a rock at the time, behind which we took refuge, and waited there a good while, in the hope that the madman's patience would be worn out; but he did not stir, and the passers by, whom I appealed to for their interference, shook their heads, muttered something about Seedy Tayeb, which proved to be the name of the saint, and went their way. In the meantime the tide was rising rapidly, and we had the unpleasant choice of being

drowned or shot. We agreed it was better to risk the latter ; so telling my sister to run off in another direction, I stepped forward and gave him the preference of a standing shot. The maniac took aim and fired ; and I heard the ball whiz into the water behind me. I was proceeding to run up to him by a path which led to that part of the town wall where he was standing, when I observed that he was coolly reloading his gun ; and as the next shot at close quarters might have proved more effective, I thought the best thing I could do was to follow my sister ; so I fairly took to my heels.

Having reached home, and described to our guard the appearance of the man, we were sallying out to seize him, when the maniac himself, Seedy Tayeb, rushed into our court-yard, laughing heartily, and presented me with a basket of melons. The poor fellow was a most confirmed madman, and consequently a very great saint : and as I had not the heart to proceed formally against him, I only required that he should be imprisoned until he could be sent to the interior, whence the governor of Tangier promised he should not return.

But to return to our journey. After proceeding a short distance we reached the ferry ; and except that of Charon, there can scarcely be one more perilous to cross. There is no pier, nor is there a plank provided to accommodate either man or beast in embarking.

A boisterous scene of whipping, kicking, and rearing now ensued, as is usual here ; and broken knees or other more serious injuries are the frequent result, before a timid horse can be made to take the awkward leap, or be dragged by main force over the high side of the clumsy craft. My horse refused at first to make the leap, but having myself got into the boat and caressed the intelligent animal, he cleared the gunwale at a bound, and poking his muzzle into my lap, seemed to say—*Now that I have obeyed your wishes, I look to you for protection.*

The ferry is in the hands of government ; an impudent negro and a lazy Moor were the boat's crew. Having struggled through the stream, we landed in the same awkward style under the town wall, amongst a rabble of Jew porters, who, like their European brethren, contend and clamour for your baggage, till the strongest carry it off by main force.

There were trading vessels, British, French, and Spanish, moored at the mouth of the river, waiting for cargoes; which consist principally of wool, skins, bark, beans, and grain of various sorts, which are taken in return for iron, broadcloth, cottons, muslin, sugar, and tea.

We rode through the gate of Laraiche followed by an insolent mob, to whom we gave full permission to curse and swear at the Nazarenes whilst they were out of our hearing; but I deemed it expedient now and then to warn them of the Basha's displeasure, if any one dared "to burn my grandfather."* The very name of Eslowy caused their grim faces to assume a ghastly smile at the Kaffer † who could obtain the protection of their dreaded governor.

We reached our consular agent's *palacio*, as the Jews dwelling upon the coast of this country, whose ancestors were exiled from the Spanish peninsula some three hundred years ago, still call their wretched habitations. The British agent, a native Jew, had provided for us two of his best rooms. There were, for a wonder, windows in one of them; but of glass, of course, there was none. However, we had two chairs and a carpet, which were the sole, yet unusually ample, furniture. We longed for our tent and the fresh air of the country; but we should have caused a mighty hubbub in the town, had we encamped outside its walls, instead of accepting apartments in the *Palacio del Consul Ingles*. In the street before my lodging were the remains of large houses that had evidently been at one time the decent and comfortable dwellings of European consuls, when Laraiche was the residence of several representatives of Christian states in this country; but these habitations were now far too ruinous and filthy for us to hazard the taking up our abode within their walls.

Shortly after my arrival I sent a message to the Basha with many salams, asking an audience of his excellency for the following day. A soldier soon presented himself, bidding me welcome in the great man's name, and appointing my interview with him at ten the next morning. With usual Moorish effrontery the messenger demanded of me a fee for conveying the Basha's

* A common curse in West Barbary.

† The rebeller against God.

wishes, which he told me were worth a doubloon.* On offering a suitable gift, he refused it, as not being equal to his expectation; so I threw it to a beggar who had been dinning us with a tale of woe, telling him that he had to thank the impudence of the soldier for this godsend. The contrast between the messenger's face and that of the beggar was well worth the trifle.

Before the day closed, we took a stroll towards the market-place, which is a broad and handsome street, having on one side a colonnade, and on the other the ruins of a Portuguese church, and of several handsome mansions, evidently of Christian architecture. The principal mosque is a fine building, but its minaret, as is frequently the case in these Saracenic structures, appears too slim and lofty for its base.

We were careful not to excite the displeasure of the inhabitants by halting before the entrance to have a peep into the interior; for the Moors, unlike their partially enlightened brethren of the East, prohibit the Christian and the Jew from entering a mosque or other place consecrated by the law of the Prophet, under pain of death, or embracing the faith of Islam. A droll instance of this occurred some years ago at Tangier.

The clock of the "*Jamaa Kebeer*," the great mosque at Tangier, being much out of order, needed some skilful craftsman to repair it. None, however, of the "Faithful" were competent to the task, nor could they even discover what part of the machinery was deranged, though many put forth their opinions with great pomp and authority; amongst the rest one man gravely declared that a *Jin*, or evil genius, had in all probability taken up its abode within the clock. Various exorcisms were accordingly essayed, sufficient, as every true believer supposed, to have expelled a legion of devils—yet all in vain: the clock continued dumb.

A Christian clockmaker, "a cursed Nazarene," was now their sole resource; and such a one fortunately was sojourning in Tangier—"the city protected of the Lord." He was from Genoa, and of course a most pious Christian; how then were they, the faithful followers of the Prophet, to manage to employ him? The clock was fixed in the wall of the tower, and it was, of

* A gold coin worth sixteen Spanish dollars.

course, a thing impossible to allow the Kaffer to defile God's house of prayer by his sacrilegious steps.

The time-keeper *Moakheed* reported the difficulty to the kady;* and so perplexed the grey-bearded dealer in law and justice by the intricacy of the case, that, after several hours of deep thought, the judge confessed he could not come to a decision, and proposed to report upon the subject to the kaid, advising that a meeting of the local authorities should be called. "For, in truth," said the kady, "I perceive that the urgency of this matter is great. Yes! I myself will expound our dilemma to the kaid."

The kaid entered feelingly into all the difficulty of the case, and forthwith summoned the other authorities to his porch, where various propositions were put forward by the learned members of the council.

One proposed to abandon the clock altogether; another would lay down boards over which the infidel might pass without touching the sacred floor; but this was held not to be a sufficient safeguard; and it was finally decided to pull up that part of the pavement on which the Kaffer trod, and whitewash the walls near which he passed.

The Christian was now sent for, and told what was required of him; and he was expressly commanded to take off his shoes and stockings on entering the Jamaa. "That I won't," said the stout little watchmaker; "I never took them off when I entered the chapel of the most Holy Virgin," and here he crossed himself devoutly, "and I won't take them off in the house of your Prophet."

They cursed in their hearts the watchmaker and all his race, and were in a state of vast perplexity. The wise Oolama† had met early in the morning; it was already noon, and yet, so far from having got over their difficulty, they were in fact exactly where they had been before breakfast; when a grey-bearded Mueddin, who had hitherto been silent, craved permission to speak. The kaid and the kady nodded their assent.

"If," said the venerable priest, "the mosque be out of repair, and lime and bricks have to be conveyed into the interior for the use of the masons, do not asses carry those loads, and do not they enter with their shoes on?"

* Judge.

† Learned men.

"You speak truly," was the general reply.

"And does the donkey," resumed the Mueddin, "believe in the One God, or in Mahomed the Prophet of God?"

"No, in truth," all replied.

"Then," said the Mueddin, "let the Christian go in shod as a donkey would do, and come out like a donkey."

The argument of the Mueddin was unanimously applauded. In the character of a donkey, therefore, did the Christian enter the Mahomedan temple, mended the clock—not indeed at all like a donkey—but as such, in the opinion of "the Faithful," came out again; and the great mosque of Tangier has never since needed another visit of the donkey to its clock.

There appeared to be in the market a great scarcity of all sorts of provisions, considering the population, which, I suppose, may amount to about 3000 souls—and my servants complained of much difficulty in finding food for either ourselves or our cattle.

As we strolled through the market-place we met a party of Eisowy, or snake-charmers; they consisted of four Soosys, or natives of the province of Soos; three of whom were musicians, their instruments being long rude canes resembling in form a flute, but open at both ends, into one of which the performer blew, producing melancholy but pleasing notes.

We invited the Eisowy to exhibit their snakes; to this they readily assented. They commenced by raising up their hands as if they were holding a book, muttering in unison a prayer addressed to the Deity, and calling upon Seedna* Eiser, who in Marocco is held as the patron saint of snake-charmers. Having concluded this invocation, the music struck up, and the snake-charmer danced in rapid whirls, which no Strauss could have kept time to, around the basket containing the reptiles. This basket was made of cane-work covered with goat's skin. Stop-

* This is quite a distinct personage from Seedna Aisa, which is the name given by the Arabs to our Saviour. Christ is also called the *Roh Allah*, or "Breath of God." The Arabs do not believe in the crucifixion of our Saviour; they suppose that a man resembling Christ was miraculously placed in his stead whilst he ascended to heaven. I am told there was a law in Marocco to punish with death by fire any Mahomedan cursing Seedna Aisa. The Moors hold both the Old and New Testament in veneration, but say that these divine works were superseded by the Koran. They also tell us that we possess garbled copies of the inspired authors, as no mention is found in them of the coming of the Prophet Mahomed.

ping suddenly, the snake-charmer thrust his bare arm into the basket, and pulled out a large black Cobra Capella, or hooded snake: this he handled as if it had been his turban, and proceeded to twine it around his head, dancing as before, whilst the reptile seemed to obey his wishes, by preserving its position on his head. The Cobra was then placed on the ground, and standing erect on its tail moved its head to and fro, apparently keeping time to the music. Now, whirling round in circles still more rapidly than before, the Eisowy again put his hand into the basket and pulled out successively and placed on the ground two very poisonous species of serpents, natives of the deserts of Soos, called Leffa. They were of a mottled colour with black spots; were thick in the body and not above two feet and a half or three feet long.* The name Leffa is given, I imagine, by the Mogrebbin Arabs to this kind of serpent, from their resemblance, when in the act of darting at their prey, to the Arabic letter ب, fa,† le being merely the article transposed. These reptiles proved more active and less docile than the Cobra; for half coiled and holding their heads in a slanting position ready for an attack, they watched with sparkling eyes the movements of the charmer, darting at him with open jaws every now and then, as he ventured within their reach, and throwing forward their body with amazing velocity, whilst their tail appeared to remain on the same spot, and then recoiling back again. The Eisowy warded off with his long haik the attacks which they made upon his bare legs, and the Leffas seemed to expend their venom upon the garment.

Now, calling on Seedna Eiser, he seized hold of one of the two serpents by the nape of the neck, and danced round with it; then opening its jaws with a small stick, he displayed to the spectators the fangs, from which there oozed a white and oily substance. He then put the Leffa to his arm, which it immediately seized with its teeth, whilst the man, making hideous contortions, as if in pain, whirled rapidly around, calling on his patron saint. The reptile continued its bite until the Eisowy took it off, and showed us the blood which it had drawn.

Having laid the Leffa down, he then put the bitten part of his

* A sketch of these reptiles is given in Aly Beg's work on Marocco.

† In the East the fa is written thus ف; the point being put above, instead of below the letter.

arm into his mouth ; and, pressing it with his teeth, danced for several minutes, whilst the music played more rapidly than ever, till, apparently being quite exhausted, he again halted.

Conceiving that the whole was a trick—that the Leffa had been bereft of its poison, and that its bite consequently would be as harmless as that of a rat, I requested to be allowed to handle the serpent.

“Are you an Eisowy?” said the man of Soos ; “or have you steady faith in the power of our saint?”

I replied in the negative.

“Then,” said he, “if the snake bite you, your hour is come ! Bring me a fowl or any animal, and I will give you sure proof, ere you attempt to touch a Leffa.”

A fowl was brought, and part of the feathers having been plucked, the serpent was again taken up by the charmer, and allowed to bite the fowl for an instant. The bird was put on the ground, and after running around as if in a fit for about the space of a minute, tottered and fell dead. Its flesh became shortly afterwards of a bluish hue. It is needless to say that after this I declined handling the Leffa.

The only way that I can account for the Eisowy escaping unharmed from the bite of the snake, is, that either he prevents the Leffa, when in the act of seizing his arm, from using *its fangs*, and that the blood seen is drawn by the teeth only of the reptile, which are distinct from its fangs, or else that the Eisowy possesses an antidote to the poison, and that he puts it into his mouth and applies it to the bitten part during the dance.

Putting these serpents into the basket, the snake-charmer next took out some common snakes caught in the neighbourhood of Tangier, amongst which I observed the *Boomenfakh*, or “*father of tumefaction* :” the bite of these snakes is not in general of so venomous a nature as to endanger life. The Eisowy played with them for some time, and allowed them to bite his half-naked body whilst he danced around streaming with blood ; then taking the tail of one of them into his mouth, whilst others twined themselves around his body, he commenced eating, or rather chewing, the reptile ; which, writhing with pain, bit him in the neck and hands until it was actually destroyed by the Eisowy’s teeth :—a most cruel and disgusting sight.

I have frequently witnessed individuals belonging to the sect of Eisowys, in whose company I have chanced to be during my sporting expeditions, handle scorpions or poisonous reptiles without fear or injury, the animal never attempting to sting or bite them. Whilst I was residing at Tangier, a young Moor, who was witnessing the exploits of a snake-charmer, ridiculed his prowess as a mere delusion, and having been dared by the Eisowy to touch one of his serpents, the lad ventured into the mystic ring, was bitten by a Leffa, and shortly afterwards expired.

Seedna Eiser is said to have lived about two centuries ago, and to have been a very learned man and a preacher of the Unity of God. It is related of this personage that whilst travelling through the Desert of Soos, he was followed by a great multitude, who thirsted for the precepts which dropped like precious jewels from the mouth of the sage, and as the multitude travelled afar, they hungered and clamoured to Seedna Eiser for bread. On this the sage's patience forsook him, and turning around to the multitude, he exclaimed in a voice of rebuke, "*Kool sim*"—a common Arabic curse which means "Eat poison." The saint's followers, taking these words literally, treasured them up in their hearts, and having unbounded faith in their efficacy, they fed upon the reptiles of the desert, and were preserved from hunger and exhaustion; and from that time, their descendants, and all those who believe in Seedna Eiser's power, handle without fear or injury the most poisonous reptiles.

The individuals of this sect, of which there are many in most of the towns throughout West Barbary, resemble in some respects the jumping Dervishes of the East, assembling, like them, on certain feast-days, in houses appropriated for the purpose, and there celebrating the rites of their faith. They conceive that their love and reverence for their patron and saint arrive at so high a pitch as to surpass the bounds of man's reason, and this creates for the time in which they indulge in their worship an aberration of the senses, which causes them to suppose that they become wild animals, such as lions, tigers, dogs, birds, &c., and they commence roaring, barking, and imitating both the voice and action of whatever animal they may have taken a fancy

to be changed into ; tearing themselves and each other. This state of madness is partly brought on by an intoxicating herb called hasbeesh, which is swallowed in small quantities and a glass of water taken to wash it down ; or by smoking keek, likewise a herb found in Marocco. When the Eisowys are in this state, they are sometimes paraded through the streets chained or bound together, and preceded by their *Emkadem*, or chief, on horseback. They utter the most horrible sounds and leap about in every direction. A live sheep is sometimes thrown to them by the spectators ; this they will tear and devour in the raw state, entrails and all.

If they happen to break away from their fetters, they will seize upon any Jew or Christian whom they meet. Not many years ago, in Tangier, a Jewish boy was said to have been torn to pieces ; but I am not inclined to believe that such horrid cruelty could exist even in West Barbary.

On one occasion I was attacked by one of these individuals, who had broken away from his companions ; but having with me a thick stick, which I applied very energetically to his bare skull, it seemed to awaken his reasoning faculties, for he left me and commenced devouring some cabbages in a shop hard by.

The Moors look upon these sects with a less favourable eye than the Turks, for individuals of high importance of the latter race are often enrolled among the Dervishes.

It has often occurred to me that these rites, which appear so repugnant to the laws of the Prophet, must be the remains of some more ancient worship, and that in the mystic dance of the Dervishes may be traced a remnant of the solar worship, the movements of the performers being typical of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies.

We returned to our hovel just in time to enjoy a splendid view from its windows of a sunset on the verge of the broad Atlantic. Then dinner being announced, our host joined us at table, and, being a Rabbi, went through the usual forms and prayers in cutting bread and pouring out the wines, and on sitting down and rising up ; all which looked much like *hocus pocus* to our "heathen" minds. It was the Sabbath-eve, and he could not touch fire nor hold a lighted candle. To such an extent, indeed, does this superstition prevail among these benighted children of

Israel, that a poor young woman whose clothes had caught fire on a Saturday, and this in the midst of her family, among whom were several grown-up men, was obliged to rush into the street, and would have been burnt to death had it not been for the prompt assistance of some passing Moslem.

Our host proved to be an intelligent and cunning Jew. His wife was dead; and two wretched-looking children, the only pledges of affection his late spouse had left him, were intrusted to the care of his sister, an elderly matron, who might perhaps some twenty years ago have boasted of good looks. The Jewesses of Marocco are for the most part a comely race, especially those of Tetuan, who, I have thought, sometimes rivalled in regularity of features even my own dear countrywomen—the fairest of the fair: but in expression the uneducated Jewess of Barbary disappoints her Christian admirer; there is nothing intellectual about her, and she is, in truth, merely a beautiful animal.

While at dinner, our meal and talk were interrupted by the noise of a cymbal and the shrill yell of women, accompanied by the nasal shouts of the Hebrew tribe, who were conducting a bride to her betrothed; the procession stopped beneath our window, as a compliment to the strangers, who might wish to see the finery of the happy damsel. She was, indeed, extremely pretty, and fair as purest wax: her “Jew’s eyes” were shut, but the eyelashes and eyebrows were all a bridegroom could wish. A blaze of torches surrounded her, and she was supported by her male relations. Every muscle of her countenance seemed immoveably fixed, in obedience to the rigid ordinances of her race; and the poor bride looked, as she proceeded on her way, more like an automaton than a living lass just about to be married. On her head was a tiara rich in pearls and other jewelry. Her dress was of crimson and gold cloth; and a necklace, bracelets, and anklets of a very antique form loaded her slender person.* Her feet were *stockingless*, but were encased in gilded leathern shoes. Don José and myself made audible

* Even the poorest classes in Marocco wear on holidays apparel of the richest kind. Their jewelry is often very ancient, being handed down from mother to daughter from time immemorial.

vows for her happiness, and then she was led on to the dwelling of her future lord.

Although the Jews of this country are ruled by their Mahomedan masters with the extremest tyranny, and are constantly treated with the most shameful injustice, their importance to the welfare of the state seems to be fully understood; for the government has imposed a legal check on their emigration, by prohibiting the embarkation for another country of any female of the Jewish persuasion. The gold, silver, and tin smiths are mostly Jews; and much more than half of the principal traders in the seaport towns of Marocco are of the Hebrew nation.

Dinner being over, our host and his sister retired; and my fellow-traveller, wrapped in his *capa* and stretched on the carpet, was soon heard snoring in deep sleep, whilst I, seated on the ground after the fashion of a Moorish scribe, wrote my journal till the expiring flame of my lamp put an end to my further lucubration, and I settled myself to sleep as composedly as I could. But my rest was most abominably invaded by every possible variety of noisome insects, amongst which the gnats were the most unendurable. Anything worthy of the name of sleep was out of the question: and when, as the morning dawned, my friend the Hadj entered our apartment, and inquired how we had passed our first night at Laraiche, I broke out into a violent philippic against the place and all its inhabitants, the gnats especially; and ended by expressing my astonishment that such detestable animals should ever have been created.

The Hadj appeared greatly shocked at my impiety. "Mashallah!" (the will of God) ejaculated he with reverence. "All things were made by God for some good purpose: and now, Christian, you shall learn of me the history of the gnat.

"In the beginning God created the sea; and in his goodness made it sweet, even as the waters of the living fountain. And God appointed a vast extent for its dominion, and endowed it with wondrous power above all his other creatures. Then the sea, raising his head to the stars and roaring terribly, lashed the borders of the land and terrified mankind; and growing day by day more arrogant, it abused in wantonness the power given it, and, passing the limits given it by its Creator, overwhelmed the land, and, destroying every living thing that was on the face of

the earth, hearkened no more to the rebukes of its Maker. And man and all God's creatures, excepting the fish, sought in vain for refuge, and were drowned in the whirlpool of its fury.

"Then God spake unto the sea and said, 'Hear, O sea! thou hast laughed to scorn thy Creator; and not hearkening to my voice, thou hast overleaped the limits that I ordained for thee: wherefore, lo! I will now create the most insignificant of winged insects, and I will create them in countless myriads, and thou shalt know that I am thy master and thy God.' So God created the gnat. And clouds of gnats darkened the face of the earth. And God said unto the gnats, 'Settle ye on the face of the sea, and drink thereof.' And the gnats drank; and the sea became dry; yea, the terrible sea became as nothing in the stomach of the puny gnat. And now God spake thus unto the sea as it lay in the stomach of the gnats, and said, 'Know ye, now, O sea! that I am the Lord of all.' And the sea repented and acknowledged Him to be the Lord. And God said unto the gnats, 'Vomit up now the waters from your stomachs.' And the gnats did as God commanded; and the sea returned unto its bed; but the waters thereof became salt, owing to the stomach of the gnats; and thus God ordained that it should remain, that the sea might know that He is the Lord, and that there is none other God."*

"Wondrous and miraculous," I exclaimed, "are the ways of God! The gnat, in truth, is a wily insect. Hark ye, now, O Hadj, how he tunes his pipe, buzzing sweetly, '*Habeeby! Habeeby!*' (O my beloved! O my beloved!), and while thus fascinating us with his charms, he suddenly stoops; and, brute as he is, darts his relentless sting into the object of his admiration. There, I have killed one! and, O sea! I am thy avenger."

* This legend is, I believe, peculiar to the Berber tribes. It is evidently formed on the Mosaic account of the deluge.

CHAPTER X.

Visit to the Basha—Scene in an Arab Dooar—Arab Resignation—Visit to a Synagogue—The Sacred Scrolls—The High Priest—Battery—A gifted Cannon—Christian Cemetery—Town Walls—History of Mulai Yezeed—A Moorish Cart—Policy of the Sultan—The Basha's Favourite—Eating up a Province—Human Sacrifice—Manner of crossing a River.

AT the appointed hour, preceded by Mallem Hamed and a soldier from the Basha, we paced with measured steps to the *Kasba*, or citadel, wherein is situated the "*Dar-al-Kebeer*,"* the residence of the governor. Having passed through an ancient Moorish archway, we were desired to stop near a mosque, that notice might be given to the great man of our approach. The messenger soon returned, bidding us move on. Again we were brought to a halt in the porch, in front of which were the guard, *seated*, as is usual in Marocco, unless when the governor himself, or some personage of much importance, approaches.

The usher, having announced to the Basha our arrival at his threshold, returned to show us the way. Proceeding through a narrow passage, we arrived at the *Meshwa*, or seat of council. This hall was divided into two compartments by a line of arches, and the inner floor was raised three steps above the outer. Upon this again there was a second elevation, which is considered the place of honour, and here was seated his excellency. Near him were placed two *chairs* for his Christian visitors. The usher, having made a very low obeisance, retired.

The Cid Abd Selam E'Slowy gave us a cordial welcome, shaking hands and pressing his own to his heart in token of his friendly feeling. Our host, the consular agent, who stood barefooted at the entrance of the *Meshwa*, was saluted in his turn, and then retired.

The Basha was reclining on a rich carpet, supported by round velvet cushions embroidered in gold. Numerous letters lay

* The Great House.

around him, some open, others with the seal yet unbroken, and amongst the former I observed, placed upon a cushion exalted above the rest, a broad letter stamped on the top with the great seal of the Sultan. His excellency was dressed in a pale green caftan, over which was a fine muslin robe. He had wide trousers of a light coloured yellow cloth; his girdle was of red leather, embroidered in silk, with silver clasp; he wore on his head the common Fez cap, circled by a white turban; and over all fell a transparent haik of the finest texture: in his hand he held a rosary. His manners were graceful and gentlemanly, and a pleasant smile gave an agreeable expression to his features. The father of this potentate was Basha over half the empire, and proved a good friend to the English during the war in the Peninsula, when we depended much on West Barbary for the supply of our armies, and also of our fleets in the neighbouring seas. It was Nelson's observation, that, should Great Britain be at war with any European maritime state, Marocco must be friendly to us, or else we must obtain possession of Tangier.

Abd Selam E'Slowy is, I believe, as good a man as his father; but he has not his capacity nor his energy of character.

After the usual compliments had passed, and I had explained the object of my journey, the Basha expressed his willingness to render me every assistance, adding, that if I would leave to him the choice, he would not rest till he had found a mare that "should make bright the face of all parties."

I did not accept the offer, as I had little faith in his knowledge of horse-flesh; and it occurred to me that, if I were hereafter to disapprove his selection, I might grievously and perhaps very inconveniently offend him. Declining therefore his proposition, on the ground of the trouble it would give him, I requested to be furnished with a letter to the Sheikh of Ibdowa, whose tribe was said to possess the finest breed of horses in the north of Marocco. He acceded to this request; and to give the letter the greater effect, directed that one of his attendants, "a kaid of a hundred," should accompany us.

As we were about to take our leave, he told me that he had been unwell for several days, and—as the people of his country invariably suppose that the Nazarene must be learned in medicine—he insisted upon my prescribing a suitable remedy. In

vain I protested my ignorance of the healing art. He still persisted in his request; so I was forced, maugre my honesty, to undertake to play the doctor, and having promised to send him a dose, we parted the best of friends.

I remember, on one occasion, travelling in this country with a companion who possessed some knowledge of medicine: we had arrived at a dooar, near which we were about to pitch our tents, when a crowd of Arabs surrounded us, cursing and swearing at the "rebellers against God." My friend, who spoke a little Arabic, turning round to an elderly person, whose garb bespoke him a priest, said—"Who taught you that we are disbelievers? Hear my daily prayer, and judge for yourselves:" he then repeated the Lord's prayer. All stood amazed and silent, till the priest exclaimed—

"May God curse *me*, if ever I curse again those who hold such belief; nay, more, that prayer shall be my prayer till my hour be come. I pray thee, O Nazarene, repeat the prayer, that it may be remembered and written amongst us in letters of gold."

We then pitched our tents in peace, and shortly afterwards were visited by the priest, who, entering our tent with a sorrowful face, told us his child was sick in bed, and begged we would come and cure him. We went to the tent, and found the invalid in a burning fever. My friend prescribed some harmless medicine, which was immediately taken in our presence: an hour afterwards the boy was a corpse. A murmur ran through the village that the Nazarenes had poisoned the child: so ere the following morning dawned we had struck our tent and were hastening our departure, fearing the fanaticism of the inhabitants: but before we had time to depart, the father came to us bringing a bowl of milk. "Accept this, O Christians," he said, "in return for your kindly feeling towards my dear child; and think not that I join the ignorant in supposing you caused or wished his death. His hour had come; he is now happy; and God's will be done."

The inhabitants of Laraiche are ill-favoured, and very different from the generality of the Moorish race, who have fine features and athletic forms. There seems to be in this town a great mixture of the Negro with the native blood; and the

countenance of every one you meet is marked with ill-health. There is much intermittent fever and ague prevalent in some seasons—occasioned probably by the quantity of flooded land and marshes in the neighbourhood.

This being the Jews' sabbath, we went with our host to the synagogue—a miserable room, wherein were assembled some twenty Hebrews, wretched in appearance, whose high-priest, a greasy-faced Rabbi, was standing before a dirty desk, and held in his hand a still dirtier book of prayers. Seated on wooden benches against the walls, these degenerate sons of Israel were moving their heads to and fro, like wild beasts in a cage, mumbling their orisons. Religion seemed to be with them a mere outward form, for they nodded to a friend or frowned at an enemy, even whilst chanting the sacred Psalms. One or two young men were called up by the Rabbi to read a chapter for the day from a large and beautifully written volume of the Bible. This they did in their usual sing-song voice, and as each returned to his seat his hand or robe was kissed by all he passed.

In front of a recess, wherein the sacred scrolls were deposited, was suspended a lamp, in the shape of a gigantic glass tumbler, held within a brazen frame-work formed to represent the seal of Solomon. The holy receptacle was now opened, and the hallowed roll of the Law and the Prophets exposed to the eyes of the congregation; after which it was carried in procession round the synagogue, and then replaced with religious care.

It is painful to look upon these degraded Israelites. Gross ignorance, bigotry, and depravity are stamped upon their features; and the hump of slavery rises markedly between their shoulders. Glad were we to get again into purer air.

The Don and I paid a visit to our nags, which were picketed within a battery overlooking the harbour. This is a spot which in general the Franks are forbidden to enter; as the Moors say they fear we might learn their art in gunnery: but the real reason, I suspect, is that they are ashamed we should perceive the misery of their mock defences, and their honeycombed guns mounted upon rotten carriages. I found, however, in the battery one handsome brass twelve-pounder, having an Arabic inscription. It appeared to be of Portuguese workmanship,

and, I suppose, had been one of the trophies wrested by the Moors from their old invaders, who for so many ages domineered over the African Al Garb, whence their kings were styled "Rey de Portugal e de los Algarves."

In Tangier there is a cannon which, in consequence of its having been the means of destroying a vessel of the Christians which had entered the harbour with hostile intention, is said to be gifted with miraculous power. Pregnant women are often to be seen sitting on the gifted gun; their object being to be spared from the severer pains of childbirth.

Having obtained a guard from the governor, we proceeded to walk round Laraiche, and, entering a vineyard, were shown the Christians' burial-ground. A thicket of briars and rank weeds almost conceals the few monuments of the dead that remain unviolated; so we gave our consular agent a small sum, requesting he would cause the ground to be cleared and earthen mounds raised over the bodies of some poor sailors which had recently been interred in this melancholy spot.

The walls of the place are lofty, and in better preservation than those of most other towns in this region. The masonry of the Portuguese is that which is chiefly conspicuous, although no doubt the eye of an antiquary would discover traces of earlier lords of Laraiche than either the Portuguese or the Moors themselves. One feature in the fortifications of this old place struck us as peculiar: there is a salient angle on the land-front, of not more, I think, than ten degrees in width, but evidently adapted to the position with more skill in the art of defensive architecture than could have been expected at so early a period. We passed the outer market-place and the slaughter-ground, and then descending towards the river, had a view of the palace of the half-Irish Sultan Mulai Yezeed.

The following sketch of the history and character of this potentate was given me by an honest and intelligent native:—

In the middle of the last century, Seedy Mohamed was shaded by the Shereefian umbrella, or, as we should say, sat on the throne of Marocco. At that period the degenerate Moors still retained some remnant of their former glory, and of the learning handed down to them by the conquerors of Spain, their polished yet dreaded ancestors. Seedy Mohamed was a man of great

energy, and endowed with a good capacity; but, being of a fanciful disposition, he prided himself, amongst other vagaries, on possessing in his harem a woman of every caste and clime.

At the commencement of his reign, in addition to other improvements which had been made throughout the empire, he was desirous to complete the defences of the wealthy city of Fas; and, knowing the superiority of the hated and despised Christian in engineering, he applied to the British government for the assistance of some person skilled in this art.

The request was acceded to, and an experienced sergeant of the corps of Sappers and Miners having been selected as a fit and sufficiently skilful person, he was placed at the disposition of his Imperial Majesty. Seedy Mohamed received the sergeant with much kindness, and allotted a suitable house for himself and his wife, a comely Irish lass, whom he had wedded a short time previous to leaving his native land. The sergeant, whose name is said to have been Brown, continued in the service of the Sultan several years after he had completed the required work at Fas, being well contented with the treatment he received from the Moorish potentate; but his course was run, and he died, leaving his widow childless.

After the usual shrieking and feasting by the disconsolate dame, at the wake of her late spouse, in which she was lustily accompanied by her Moorish acquaintances—who, indeed, rivalled by their howlings the best attended funeral in the land of Erin—she sought, with sorrowful heart, an interview of the Sultan, in order to beseech his majesty to grant her a pension and the means of returning to her own country. Seedy Mohamed was much struck by the appearance of the comely although red-haired young widow; he received her with benevolence, and at once granted her petition. But, before he dismissed her from his presence, he inquired whether she had a home, and if her parents were still alive. She said she was an orphan, and that she had few or no relations left who cared for her.

“God’s pity on you,” said the Sultan. “Why leavest thou this blessed land? Here you have friends and those who care for you. Become a true believer, and enter into that abode of unspeakable felicity, the Shereefian harem.”

“God forbid,” replied our countrywoman, “that either I should change my faith or become the concubine of any man.”

Seedy Mohamed met this opposition with kingly offers and much kind persuasion; and as he, who had never before heard a woman’s refusal, was repulsed in his advances by a low-born and simple-minded Nazarene, the flame of love kindled with vast celerity in his royal breast.

“Keep thy faith, then, pretty Infidel,” said the monarch. “Be my wife, and, if God please, thou alone shalt be the beloved in my harem.”

To become a Sultana few would have resisted, and Seedy Mohamed, having divorced that one of his four wives who had found least favour in his sight, took his Christian spouse according to the usual rights of Islam.

The following year there were great rejoicings, for the Irish Sultana had been brought to bed of a red-haired prince, who was named Yezeed, but better known in the Moorish annals as the *Zaar*, or, as we might say, Rufus.

Mulai Yezeed soon showed by his disposition that he had inherited many of the qualities both of his father and his mother. He was of a violent temper; liberal, even lavish, to those who served him faithfully; cruel, yet often performing acts of kindness and charity, and very fond of the British, whose cause he openly espoused on all occasions, and to such a degree, that it became a source of much displeasure to his Imperial Father. He, on the contrary, was especially adverse to our race, for he declared that they disgusted him with a tone of equality, and even with a pretence to superiority, which could not be brooked by the Protector of the Faith and the Sultan of Sultans. Seedy Mohamed moreover was very partial to the Spaniards, who at that time were our avowed enemies.

Mulai Yezeed, finding at length that the court of his father, who accused him of intriguing with the English government against his throne, was becoming too hot for him, determined to flee from it, and directed his steps northward towards the town of Tetuan, which at that time was the residence of the representatives of all the European powers. Wherever he passed in his flight, he gained by his liberality the good will of the inhabitants. Persecuted from sanctuary to sanctuary, despairing of

obtaining his father's pardon, he was ultimately driven into open rebellion. Having at length taken refuge with several of his followers in a holy village situated on the lofty mountains of Beni Hassen, which form part of the lower range of the Atlas, the fugitive prince was not only received with much respect by the villagers, but they declared their willingness to protect him.

This soon reached the ears of the Sultan, who issued a proclamation declaring that his son Yezeed was a traitor and a rebel; that a powerful army would be despatched to "eat up" every district, every town and hamlet, that dared yield him any shelter; and that as it had been understood Mulai Yezeed had taken refuge among the inhabitants of Beni Hassen, a host invincible should proceed thither forthwith, and should burn the sanctuary, and put to the sword every man, woman, and child, if the traitorous Yezeed were allowed to remain there.

The dread mandate of the Sultan was soon spread throughout all Beni Hassen, and the affrighted inhabitants besought Mulai Yezeed to have pity on them and leave the district.

The prince promised to do so, and saying "God's will be done," ordered his followers to the stirrup; and mounting his beautiful steed, which was picketed nigh to the great saint's sepulchre, stuck his spurs into its flank: but the noble beast refused to move; caresses and blows were alike in vain. "Behold!" cried the prince to the crowd of villagers which had collected to witness his departure, "behold the decree of fate! O ye of little faith! Ye dread the threats of a man, but ye fear not the warning of God, or the anger of your saint and patron Mulai Abd Selam."

Upon this, the most ancient of the villagers stepped forward, and addressing the prince, said: "O favoured by God, and protected by our saint! We have sinned against him, and violated the laws of hospitality, which bind us to afford refuge to all who seek it, of whatever nation or religion, and by whomsoever they may be persecuted, even were he the Protector of the Faith itself, and the living sword of our religion. Remain with us, O Prince! and not a hair of thy beard shall be injured, so long as there breathes a man of Beni Hassen able to fight in the path of God."

These doings having been quickly reported at the court, a

large army was assembled, and the Sultan placed himself at their head. But, as his Majesty was proceeding from out of the city of Fas, the shaft of the Shereefian umbrella broke; the Sultan trembled and the troops were halted, for this omen was from God. That night the Sultan was taken ill, and a few days afterwards expired.

Yezeed was immediately proclaimed Sultan and Prince of all the true Believers. One of his first acts was to behead the late vizir of his father, who had favoured the Spaniards, and to order his hand to be nailed on the door of the Spanish Consulate at Tetuan. This outrage was the cause of a rupture between Spain and Marocco, which continued during Mulai Yezeed's reign; which, however, was only of two years' duration, for he ended a reckless career at the early age of forty-three.

The tribes of Tleeg and Kholot having broken out into rebellion, this prince accompanied the army which was sent to subdue them. On one occasion, when his troops and the rebel tribes were hotly engaged, he stationed himself on a commanding height, whence he might witness the affair. Observing his troops to waver under a charge of the rebels, and flying from the field, Mulai Yezeed, furious with rage at the dastardly behaviour of his soldiers, rushed down upon them with his body-guard, driving them back upon the enemy, who were thus in their turn discomfited, the Sultan himself charging, heedless of danger, into the thickest of the *mêlée*.

This rebellion being quelled, frightful acts of tyranny and a massacre of both innocent and guilty followed. For their ruthless tyrant acted up to one of his favourite maxims—"This empire can never be governed unless a stream of human blood flow daily from the gate of my palace to the gate of the town."

It was Mulai Yezeed who gave permission to the troops, at a time when they were clamouring for arrears of pay, to plunder during twenty-four hours the Jews' quarter in Fas. The helpless Israelites were rifled of all they possessed; and it is a proverbial retort given to this day by the Jews to any Moor who asks money of them—"Were you not present at the pillage of the Jewry?"

To return to our own story. With much ostentation our guide pointed out to us on the road-side a wretched wheeled

vehicle, ruder even in construction and form than a very ancient Egyptian cart which I saw shortly after its discovery on the banks of the Nile. This is the only wheeled carriage I have met with in all Marocco. It was drawn by oxen, and was employed for transporting cannon-shot from the shore.

When Prince Frederick of Hesse-Darmstadt arrived in 1839 at Tangier, whither he exiled himself for some months, his Highness brought with him two carriages, which looked like those of the time of our great-great-grandfathers. Finding that the local authorities objected to his making use of a wheeled vehicle in the town, he wrote to the Sultan, offering to pave the main street of Tangier, if permitted to use his carriages. The Shereefian monarch graciously consented, on condition that the Prince's vehicles were deprived of their wheels, as without that precaution the Protector of the Faithful feared that the lives of his loyal subjects would be exposed to imminent danger.

Strange to say, the Prince followed this injunction to the very letter, and one of his carriages, deprived of its wheels, was borne as a litter between two stout mules.

Such is the policy of the tyrant of West Barbary, who thinks that on this subject, as on all others, "ignorance is bliss," and who knows full well that the reforms, however imperfect, of his co-religionists in the Levant are already dragging rapidly to ruin the whole religious and political system of their false prophet. Not unreasonably then does the Moorish potentate conceive, like the Chinese, that his safest course is to avert the monster innovation, and to trust to the jealousy of Christian powers, and to *Een-Shaallah*,* for the endurance of his empire. But whether reform be admitted or not in a system now obsolete and unsustainable, one thing at least is certain—that the sword of empire falling, as it has been falling for several ages, from the grasp of the Moslem, the extinction of Mohamedanism throughout the world becomes every day more certain. And herein we find a striking fulfilment of our Saviour's prophetic declaration, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."†

Early the following morning the bearer of the promised letter to the Sheikh of Ibdowa presented himself. He was a kaid, and

* If it please God.

† Matthew xxvi. 52.

a favourite attendant of the Basha. He was handsomely dressed, well mounted, and armed with the long gun and awkward Moorish sword, and on his saddle was a handsome carpet, together with saddle-bags containing pickets and barley for his horse. He brought also a loaf of bread for himself, and a small leathern bottle with a long cord to draw water from the wells. He had lately returned from the rebel provinces, which the Sultan had been "eating up," as the Moors term the proceedings of their rulers to punish rebellion. This process of "eating up" is carried into effect by the potentate's establishing a camp of some thousand men, principally cavalry, in the district of the rebels. The troops destroy in the most wanton manner what they and their horses may not require for sustenance, plunder the inhabitants of their goods and cattle, and, carrying off their women, leave the land completely desolate, and as bare of its fruits as if an army of locusts had overrun it.

During one of the late rebellions, a beautiful young girl was offered up as a propitiatory sacrifice, her throat being cut before the tent of the Sultan, and in his presence! Such sacrifices are now, happily, very rare, even in this benighted land; but oxen and horses are still frequently immolated, by penitent or over-awed rebels, to appease the offended potentate.

As we recrossed the river Al Kous, I inquired of our new companion how the Sultan manages to pass a river with his army. The kaid told me that either a bridge of rushes and reeds was made for the purpose, or, if these were wanting, the skins of animals were blown up, and covered with sticks and earth, over which the army marches; this enlightened race not having as yet arrived at so high a point of science as to be able to string together a dozen pontoons.

CHAPTER XI.

Shemmees—Curious Remains—A Narrow Escape—Moorish Superstition—Sadeed and Lokareesy—Feat of Alec—Prayers for Rain—Market of Raisàna—Curious species of Barter—The Pass of the Camel's Neck—Ain el Khader—Dinner with the Sheikh—Dispute about Pork—Arab Intrigue—Sanctuary of Mulai Abd Selam—The Leaping-stone—Peculiar Rites—The Graven Images—Curious Ruins at Tagsher—Story of the Ancient Vase.

HAVING followed the course of the river for three miles, our route took a southerly direction, and we halted to breakfast under the shade of a wide-spreading fig-tree; near to which was a well, built of large hewn stones, apparently of great antiquity, while around it were scattered the ruins of a building that had evidently been of some importance. The kaid told us, that on the top of the hill, at the foot of which we were then halting, were the remains of an old city of the Room, called Shemmees; but that it was now avoided by man as the habitation of evil spirits.

This information excited our curiosity, and Don José and myself determined to visit the abode of Jins. So taking my gun, as if in search of game, for I was well aware that our Larache guard, the kaid, would oppose a visit to the ancient town, and accompanied by the Hadj, we left the kaid and the rest of our party to discuss at their leisure a breakfast of bread and water-melons; and set out on what they would all have considered an enterprise as impious as it was perilous.

We toiled up the steep bank, and entered a narrow path through thick brushwood; the first object that presented itself was a wall of solid masonry of large hewn stones, blackened either by fire or by some other means which we could not divine. The ground over which we passed sounded hollow under our feet; and the bushes became thicker and loftier as we advanced, so that we were frequently obliged to creep on our hands and knees in order to penetrate the jungle.

After considerable toil we come to a long line of wall, some thirty feet high, running apparently to the bottom of the south-eastern side of the hill. Having clambered through a hole in this wall, a large vault presented itself, extending some forty feet under ground; it was sixteen feet wide, and twenty in height; and near to it were several other vaults of smaller dimensions. Again we advanced through the thicket. The heat was intense, and my companion almost fainted from thirst; whilst the briers so intercepted our path, that had it not been for my compass, we should have been lost in the dense mass of vegetation.

We now came upon another lofty line of wall, where we observed very large hewn stones, and several truncated marble columns imbedded in the masonry; proving that the buildings, of which these walls were the ruins, had been constructed out of the materials of some beautiful edifice of yet higher antiquity.

We crept along the base of this wall, till we again got into more open ground; and, as I passed beneath a wild olive-tree, some large animal darted at me from one of the branches, grazing the collar of my coat, and then escaping into the bushes. I fancied it was a serpent, but the movement was so sudden, I could not distinguish its form.

We returned to the well, where I found the kaid much out of humour at our long absence. On relating our adventures, and mentioning the animal that had darted at me from the tree, Mallem Hamed exclaimed, "O fortunate Nazarene! the kaid was just telling us, that of those who have visited Shemmeees few have returned; and that the evil spirits are sure to take the form of an alluring damsel, and draw their victims to destruction, or else, in the shape of a snake, or some wild animal, tear them to pieces." The kaid, with an air of grave displeasure, confirmed this account, and added that last year a young shepherd, whilst tending a flock at the foot of the hill, was darted at by a serpent from a tree, which bit him severely in the neck; and that the lad died before he reached his home.

When the mid-day heat moderated, we resumed our journey, and passed through the villages of Sadeed and Lokareesy. At four P.M. we entered the wood of Sahel, at a point about twelve miles to the southward of the road by which we had approached Laraiche. Here we crossed a beautiful rivulet, called *Boos-*

affee, or the Father of Clearness, and thence passed through a large marsh, where the tracks and rootings of wild boar abounded. This spot, our guide informed us, had been the scene of a feat of the Six-fingered while hunting the boar.

“Alee,” he said, “had shot at and struck a large boar; the wounded animal rushed at his assailant, who with one blow cut the ferocious beast in two at the small of the back. When the hunters came up, some of them expressed their doubts as to the possibility of the animal having been divided at one blow; on which Alee drew his sword, which is described as having been full five feet long, and grasping it with both hands, made a cut into the stem of a cork-tree. Then turning to the hunters, he defied the strongest man amongst them to wrench the sword from the tree: several attempts were made, but without success. That very sword is now used by a fisherman of the Sebboo for spearing *Shebbel*,” a very fine fish of the salmon genus, but white-fleshed, which the Spaniards call *Sabalo*, being a corruption of the Arabic name. This fish is found in the Guadalquivir (the Wad-al-Kibeer of Andalusia), and abounds in the Kous, and several other rivers on the western coast of Marocco.

At five we sallied forth from the wood, and passed through a large village called Leblet. The inhabitants rushed out from their houses to have a sight of the Ensara.

The country around was cultivated with the grain called drà, and there was every prospect of a favourable harvest. “God be praised,” said the kaid, “for his bounty: last year, in truth, we had a sad prospect for the crops, and had not my master, Seedy Abd Selam E'Slowy, ordered the Jews—God curse them!—to pray for rain, I know not what would have become of God's creatures!”

“Why did not the Mussulmen,” said I, “offer up their prayers?”

“So they did,” he replied, “and for twenty days and nights,—and to the banner of each mosque was affixed a prayer written by the Fekee himself. The prayers floated in the face of heaven—but all in vain, for the prayers of the Faithful are like music to God, who is worthy of all praise; and therefore the Almighty, rejoicing in the sweet sound of our supplication, granteth not the desires of our prayers, for he wishes us to continue still to

pray. But no sooner is he tormented with the disgusting prayers of Jews and infidels than he granteth forthwith their petitions, in order to be freed from their importunities.” *

About six P.M. we arrived at the market-place of Raisàna, in which grew a fine tall palm-tree, an object of considerable rarity in the south of Algarb. On this spot are held on stated days in the year the markets, or, to speak more correctly, the fairs, at which the people assemble in large numbers to barter their merchandise and cattle, and the peculiarities of Moorish habits are never more strikingly displayed than on these occasions.

In the district of Bemin Sooar, a mountainous country inhabited entirely by Berber tribes, there is one place where, during the fair, a barter of a very curious kind takes place. This fair is held only once a year, and is chiefly resorted to for the purpose of bachelors finding wives, married men adding to their matrimonial treasures, and maidens or widows getting husbands. In fact, the whole affair resolves itself into the women selling themselves: but to escape the ignominy of such a procedure, the traffic is carried on in the following manner:

Each lady desiring to enter into wedlock dresses herself in her best and most becoming attire, and taking with her a piece of cloth of her own weaving, sits down unveiled in the market-place. The men, both young and old, who are candidates for matrimony, parade about the market examining the texture of the cloth displayed by the ladies, and scrutinizing at the same time their looks and behaviour. Should the customer be pleased with the maiden, he inquires the price of the cloth; she replies by naming what she would expect as a dowry, and the amount of this she raises or depresses according as the candidate for her heart may please her, resorting to the demand of an exorbitant sum should she be averse to the purchaser. During this barter, the enamoured swain is able, in some degree, to judge of her temper and character. If they come to an agreement, the parents of the girl are appealed to; and they have the right to assent or not, as they please. Should they assent, the parties adjourn to a public notary, the contract is made, and the purchased bride is carried off to her new home.

* Absurd as this may appear, it is, nevertheless, the general belief in Marocco.

In this traffic, widows are at a low price in general, and divorced ladies sell their cloths very cheap. The wife thus purchased cannot be resold, however much the purchaser may repent of his bargain. She is his *lawful wedded wife*, and retains the purchase money, which is her jointure or dowry.

It is evident that this curious system of barter has been resorted to by these Mahomedan mountaineers as a means of evading the law of the Prophet, which interdicts all courtship before marriage.

After leaving the market-place and its beautiful palm-tree, a wide extent of plain lay before us, and the curling smoke that rose from various spots marked the position of Arab encampments.

Having crossed the plain, we entered a pass called the *Camel's Neck*. Here we sprung a large flock of the small bustard, called by the Moors *Boozarat*; they are of excellent flavour, and about the size of our black-cock.

At sunset we reached Ain el Khàder, or the Green Fountain, the site of an encampment of the tribe of Ibдор. At this spot we pitched our tent, and were visited by a son of the sheikh, who, on the part of his father, invited us to dinner, which, he said, was all prepared and waiting for us.

We accepted the invitation, and found our host within his tent, seated on a cushion covered with the skin of a Caracal lynx, which is said to possess one property of inestimable value in this country, to wit, that a flea will never settle on it; and close to this, fine sheep-skins had been placed for his guests.

"Welcome, welcome," said the sheikh; and when we were seated he added, "Are your seats comfortable? Have you all you require? Are you satisfied?"

I replied by pouring out a redundancy of blessings on him and all his family and race, especially his great-great-grandfather.

All further conversation was cut short by one of his slaves, Abd el Habeeb, appearing with a Moorish table, beautifully carved and painted in Arabesque. It was of a circular form, about two feet in diameter, and raised some six inches from the ground, which, squatting as we were around it, was a very convenient elevation.

Upon this table was placed a large Moorish bowl containing

a thick soup, with some kind of vermicelli in it, and highly seasoned with red peppers. In the savoury mess were four wooden spoons of grotesque form, with which we set to work most heartily. The next dish was a stew of beef, accompanied with slices of melon to sharpen the appetite; and then appeared the usual conical dish of kesksoo. During the repast not a word was spoken, except it were the ejaculations of *Bismillah* (in the name of God), *al Handoo-billah* (thanks to God), or perhaps a *Saffee Allah* (may God pardon me).

At length the Don and I were compelled to give up the attack upon the mountain of kesksoo, to the evident sorrow and surprise of the sheikh, who, as well as the kaid, continued for a long time to assault it vigorously.

The ample dish being at last removed, the sheikh broke silence by saying, "Truly, you *Christians* have made but a poor feast. You require pig—that is your proper food, I am told; and without it you do not thrive. They tell me too," he added, "that you milk your pigs: wonderful indeed it is how the Lord's creatures err!"

"Blessings upon your beard!" said I: "what false ideas you Moslems have regarding the followers of Seedna Aisa!* But let me talk with you about this meat of pig."

"God forbid!" said the Arab; "it is a sin even to think of it."

"Sin to think of pig?" said I, taking him up rather quickly: "Sin, do you call it? Tell me, O follower of the Prophet, who made the pig?"

"God," replied the sheikh.

"Then," said I, "according to your account, God created sin."

The old sheikh reflected for a moment, and turning to the Mallem, said—

"Of a truth, the young Nazarene has entrapped me; I never heard it put in that way before. But, O Christian, why should the prophet of God—blessed be his name!—have forbidden us to eat thereof?"

"I will endeavour to enlighten your mind," said I; "and, if it please God, you shall understand."

* The Lord Jesus.

“ Know, then, O sheikh, that the flesh of the pig is unwholesome food in a hot country ; and a heavy fine is imposed on whosoever kills a pig during the hot months, even in the Christian lands of Spain and Italy : in the hotter climes of India it is rarely eaten, either by Christian or pagan. The prophet Moses, and your prophet also, who, on this subject, adopted the precept of the great Jewish legislator, forbade it to their followers ; but the Messiah, blessed for ever, the Lord Jesus of Nazareth, gave us, his disciples, thence called Nazarenes, that divine law which was designed from the beginning to supersede the formalities of the Mosaic dispensation, and he taught us, in his far more enlightened code, that ‘ there is nothing unclean in itself.’ * Seedna Aisa by his heavenly wisdom foresaw that his followers would be wise in their generation, and would avoid excess.”

The old sheikh listened with great attention to this long oration, which I uttered with the gravity of tone that so serious a theme demanded ; and when I paused he remained some time silent, as if pondering my words.

Although I knew too much of the Arab character to expect to make him a convert, I could not refrain from going on.

“ Some six hundred years,” I said, “ before your lawgiver, Mohamed of Mecca, flourished, Seedna Aisa, the Messiah, appeared on earth and gave us forth those laws by which we have since been governed. The goodness of them is to be estimated by the prosperity of Christendom, at least of all those regions of it wherein the Divine will has not been thwarted by the evil machinations and superstitious schemes of some of his pretended followers, who take the name of Christian, but do not make the Gospel of Christ their rule. Christ has allowed us to eat pork ; but he has commanded us not to bear false witness against our neighbour ; he has said, ‘ Thou shalt not lie.’ See, in yonder town, which we left yesterday, no Jew or Moslem would taste of pig ; but few are there, I fear, that for the gain of a few moozoonats † would not give false evidence. They can be strict followers of the law in what is unimportant, but they are breakers of it in what is of great moment. Pardon me, O sheikh, but you know the truth of what I assert.”

* Rom. xiv. 14.

† A moozoonat is composed of six floos, equal to about a penny sterling.

"Very curious," replied he, "and you have spoken much truth:" and upon this he fell into a brown study. I had not, however, any great idea that I had made a convert, and indeed if I had, his next words would have dispelled the illusion. For, still harping upon the 'father of tusks,' he said, almost with a sigh, "I am told that there is only one part of the pig which is forbidden; but, unluckily, our prophet forgot to mention which. May God have mercy on us all!"

"Amen," I responded; and we changed the conversation.

It was a fine moonlight night as we returned to our quarters, and all was silent, except now and then the distant howling of the jackal. The Hadj challenged us, as we neared the tent, with the single word "allee?" (who?).

"God be blessed," cried I, "for good men who watch and pray preparing for the world to come."

"*May your end be happy,*"* replied the Hadj; and we all betook ourselves to rest.

In the night we were awakened by a loud screaming, the cause of which was an amorous young Arab, who had entered by stealth the tent of his sweetheart, with whom he had arranged a rendezvous, the father being absent at Laraiche. The mother was supposed by the lovers to be asleep, but she had only been dosing, and even in that state of semi-repose she had kept one eye open. The matron, supposing the young man was a thief, screamed for help, in which the girl, treacherous to her lover, deemed it prudent to join, declaring that all the young man said about an assignation was false, and so well did she play her part that the sheikh ordered the culprit to be secured, and gave directions that he should be sent the next day to prison at Laraiche, to be judged by the law of the Prophet.

Before six in the morning we were on horseback; the Arabs were in a state of much commotion, for the amorous swain had escaped in the night, and was supposed to have taken the road to the sanctuary of Mulai Abd Selam, and it was well known that it would require an extraordinary mandate from the Sultan to violate that great sanctuary, in order to arrest a criminal charged with even deeper offences than this man.

* This expression, when used by a Mohamedan, signifies a hope that you may be converted to Islamism before death.

The sanctuary of Mulai Abd Selam is situated on the rugged Sierra of Beni Hassen, whose snow-capped heads are seen from the Straits of Gibraltar towering above the lesser hills around the city of Tetuan. Here all that was mortal of that 'inspired person—one who, in the "land of the infidel Nazarenes, who rebel against God, would have been profanely called a madman"—is deposited, and, like the holy Kaaba, Mulai Abd Selam has usurped the site where his ancestors worshipped before their eyes were opened to the knowledge of the one only God.

Early in the spring of every year, pilgrims visit the holy shrine, and I gathered the following account of their journey from Hadj Hamed Asharky, brother of my servant, who was himself a seven-fold pilgrim, and whose mother could boast of having knelt at the sepulchre of the saint on seventeen different occasions.

A kaffla of some hundred souls having been collected, composed of men, women, and children, mounted on beasts of burden of every degree, from the gigantic camels to diminutive donkeys, and each family being provided with a little tent, they are marched in triumphal procession through the streets of Tangier, with flags flying, and the *ghaita* and *tebel* (the pipes and drum) joining in horrid discord.

They pass the first night at the village of Mahoga, a short distance south of Tangier. The next day they proceed through an extensive undulating plain; and then, having passed a rugged line of hills, encamp at the foot of Beni Hassen. About noon the following day, they are blessed with the view of the white-washed tomb of Seedy Abd Selam, overhung by the rock of the "Sakht el Waladeen," or "the mother's wrath and judgment." Here again they pitch their tents, for at this spot a ceremony must be performed.

A flat white stone of circular form, smooth as if polished by man, and of a substance like marble, is the object of religious veneration. It is called the Leaping-stone, and such of the pilgrims as can jump over it are looked upon as blessed by the Deity; whereas the evil-disposed are sure, when they make the attempt, either to alight on the stone or to touch some part of it. It is raised but a few inches from the ground, and appears so small, that the Hadj fancied he could almost stride it. He said,

however, that he had never attempted to leap over it; for amongst hundreds whom he had witnessed make the trial, there were not half a dozen who succeeded: "and this," said he, with a look of sadness, "is a melancholy proof of the wickedness of man in these degenerate days."

The next morning the kaffla proceeds, passing the house where Mulai Yezeed dwelt, when he sought refuge in this sanctuary from the vengeance of his father the Sultan Mohamed. Then the train ascends the holy mount of Mulai Abd Selam; and so steep is the ascent, that women and children are obliged to dismount, wending their way through a wood of wild olive and other forest trees, every one of which is leaning in act of adoration towards the holy site. On this mount the air is cool even in the hottest months; and every pilgrim's heart throbs with anxiety as he approaches the holy ground.

No sooner do they come within the confines of the village, than they are beset by numerous children of the Shereefian inhabitants, descendants of the saint, and guardians of their ancestor's venerated shrine. Small sweet biscuits have been provided as an offering to these holy urchins, and while they scramble for these the kaffla is allowed to proceed without further molestation.

They now enter the village, which is composed of thatched huts, and here again they pitch their tents. At night the camp is visited by the Shereefs, to each of whom a small gift is presented according to the means of the donor; but here, as in various other countries, the old adage is found too true, that the greater the saint the greater the rogue; for the pilgrims are obliged to keep a sharp watch all night, as petty pilfering seems to be one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the descendants of Mulai Abd Selam.

Next morning they rise with the dawn, and go in procession, accompanied by the Shereefs, to the Mkadem, or chief of the sanctuary, to whom also an offering is to be made. They are then allowed to pass on; and, ascending the mountain by steps hewn in the rock, are conducted to the mouth of a cave, of which the entrance is so low that even children are obliged to crawl on their hands and knees. At length they come to a vast

cavity with a lofty vault. Into this the guides do not allow the pilgrims to penetrate.

Here are pointed out to the Faithful the "*graven images*," as they are called. These consist of the figure of a snake half coiled and with its neck erect, having before it the figures of a man and a woman, naked and in a squatting position, one of whom holds in its hand what is said to be a drum, or, according to Hadj Hamed, a sphere. This carved work is about five feet from the ground, and is in high relief.

The Shereefs, after having taken due care to impress upon the minds of the pilgrims that these petrified personages are kept in a charmed state by the power of the sainted Abd Selam, the procession again moves on, and reaches next the famous rock of the *Sakht el Waladeen*, or "the mother's curse."

This is a narrow fissure in the rock, extending perpendicularly down to a pit which, as the people assert, is bottomless; a ledge of a few inches in breadth has been cut on one border of the fissure, as a footing for those courageous pilgrims who attempt to pass through it.

The bold votary who resolves to make the fearful trial, presses his back against the side of the rock, opposite to that on which the ledge is cut, upon which ledge he fixes his feet, and thus advances, with the greatest caution, sideways. During all this time the pilgrim has his body suspended over the dark gulf. Near the extremity of the fissure, he arrives at the point of greatest difficulty; for there the sides of the cleft approach so near each other, that to squeeze through is scarcely possible. If he pass through the extremity of the fissure, the pilgrim obtains, as a special blessing, that his heart shall bear no evil will towards his parents. But should the attempt be made by the wicked, the rock closes; and the sinner is held prisoner, until the Shereefs, repeating some mystic verses and praying to Allah, the chasm yawns, and the pilgrim is enabled to retrace his steps to the point from whence he set out.

Hadj Hamed declares that, fat or thin, it makes no difference, and that a very thin man, who may have even stripped himself to the waist to reduce his bulk, may often be seen held fast, as he tries to force his way through the narrow opening; while a

fat man, with all his clothes on, shall pass through with ease. "This," he added, "all depends upon God, and the power delegated to the saint, who knows men's hearts." Hadj Hamed said further, that he never had any difficulty himself in passing. I must remark, however, that the Hadj is very spare in form, and not incommoded with a superabundance of raiment.

The pilgrims, on their return homeward, pray at the shrine of Mulai Abd Selam; and next day make the best of their way to Tangier.

But to return to our own pilgrimage.

As we departed from the Ibdor encampment, we observed troops of boys and girls employed in scaring away the doves, which commit great havoc among the corn in this region. Some of the boys showed themselves most dexterous slingers.

In about half an hour we passed a small building on the top of a mount, being the tomb of Seeyed Yamani. Some six miles south of us stood a conical hill, called Tagsher; near which, as I learned from the kaid, are some curious ruins. He described them as being those of a large castle, built of extraordinary materials, every stone being of such a size that no hundred men of modern times could move it: some of them, he said, were as much as twenty feet square and about fifteen feet high.

He described the entrances as having been blocked up by earth and sand, except in one place through which he had entered and proceeded some distance under ground; the passage becoming at last so narrow that he could not advance further, although by the light he perceived it was of yet greater extent. At a short distance from the building lay a flat stone, which he lifted up, and found beneath it a pit, that, by his description, was of an inverted conical form: it was empty.

The kaid said, that in a part of the road over which we were travelling there are remains of an underground aqueduct: and last year there were found in a well, a brazen horse, small brazen men—as he called them—and some lamps, also of the same metal. Unfortunately all these things had been broken to pieces by those who found them, and sold in secret to Jew pedlars as old brass.

The difficulty experienced in obtaining any valuable relics of the various nations that have conquered and colonized this

country is mainly to be attributed to the well known rapacity of the government; which, according to the law, has the right of seizing all treasure or other objects of value that may be discovered: and most barbarous acts of cruelty are often exercised, in extorting confessions from such unfortunate individuals as may be accused of having discovered any such.

The following instance of this was related to me as a well known fact:—

Some years ago, when Alarby E'Saidy was governor of Tangier, and dealt out his justice by weight of gold and silver, one Mohamed, a poor countryman, who dwelt a few miles distant from the ancient city of Boammar, around which lie scattered many old ruins, was ploughing a slip of land which had evidently lain fallow for many years: the land had lately been given to him as a reward for two years' hard service in active warfare, under the banners of his sultan, against the rebel tribe Oodaia: a method not unusual of recompensing the militia, who constitute the armed force of this empire. In an adjoining field was a fellow-villager actively employed in the same pursuit.

Now Mohamed's ploughshare happened to strike against some obstacle; which, on examination, proved to be a large earthen vase of curious form. Mohamed, finding it sound, and thinking it might be of service to his family for fetching water from the village well, went to the border of the field, where he had left his outer garments, and there deposited it.

The discovery, and honest Mohamed's subsequent movements, were not unobserved by his neighbour; who suspected from his silence that there was more found than an earthen pot. So, on returning from his day's labour, he told the village gossips that Mohamed had assuredly found a treasure; for he had marked him, whilst ploughing, turn up a large pot, which appeared to be very heavy, and which he had immediately hidden under his clothes, and had not said one word to him about it, although he was hard by.

The following was a market-day, when the villagers of Boammar flocked as usual to Tangier. The news of Mohamed's discovery was soon spread among the town's-folk, and it was not long ere it reached the soldiers, the alert spies of old

Alarby E'Saidy ; to whom they quickly reported the tale, with no few exaggerations.

Mohamed, unsuspecting of impending evil, was disposing of his little produce, when the rude hands of two soldiers arrested him ; and, as is usual in this country, without any reason given, dragged him before the grey-bearded Hakem.

" So, I have caught you at last, you rascal. You have found a treasure and not reported it. Speak, and let us know the amount : and look to your words."

Mohamed told his story, which was a plain one ; and, begging for mercy, requested, in order to prove the truth of his statement, that a soldier might be sent to search his house and bring the pot, which would be delivered up by his family. The kaid agreed, and Mohamed was, in the mean time, confined in prison.

The soldier made the search, and nothing was found but the empty vase. On this being announced to the Kaid Alarby, Mohamed was again brought before him.

" I am not," said the ruthless magistrate, " to be imposed upon by such small cunning. Down with him, let him have five hundred stripes, and then see if he will declare his hiding-corner for his ill-gotten wealth."

To hear was to obey ; and the unfortunate ploughman received full five hundred blows from the dreaded whip of Tsafilelts ; but he persisted to the last lash in saying that he had found no treasure.

" Back with him to the dungeon," said the kaid : and the wretched Mohamed was carried half senseless to prison.

A month passed ; and every day his poor wife trudged to town with his scanty meal : for Moorish authorities rarely bestow a morsel of food on their prisoners, leaving them to depend solely upon what may be brought by their families, who are not prevented giving the prisoners every kind of luxury, if they be able to afford it.

The little property Mohamed possessed was soon exhausted. His wife had a young family, and having no means of supporting both them and her husband, extreme want soon stared her in the face. Exhaustion of body and anguish of mind brought on a violent fever, which confined her to the hut.

Thus day after day passed away ; no one brought Mohamed his usual pittance, and no one came to soothe him in his misery : so that, had it not been for the charity of some fellow-prisoners, the honest ploughman must have died of starvation. The jailer, however, was more humane than most of his trade ; and, seeing the truly wretched state of his prisoner, endeavoured to intercede in his behalf with Kaid Alarby, but the tyrant was inflexible. "Let God be witness," said he, "I never will free him till he give up the treasure."

Upon being informed of this, poor Mohamed fell on the ground, tore his beard, and swearing by God and his prophet, cried out, "There is no justice on earth ; our religion and our law are all void ! But hark ye," said he to the jailer, "tell the governor that I submit to his will, and he shall have the treasure : tell him to send with me guards, and I will deliver up my riches." Mohamed's eye looked wild as he spoke, and the jailer knew not whether he was frantic or in his right mind.

"Aha !" said the kaid, upon hearing of his having confessed ; "I knew we should bring him to his senses. Send with him a couple of stout fellows ; and let them be on the look-out, that he does not conceal any part of his wealth."

Mohamed was conducted with shackles on his legs to Booamar. As he entered the village he learnt that his poor wife had died of sickness and grief, and that his children were supported by the miserable tell-tale, who had since bitterly repented of the injury he had thoughtlessly done to his honest neighbour, and had even offered the kaid a handsome present to induce him to free poor Mohamed from thralldom.

On reaching the ploughman's dwelling, the soldiers were about to enter with him : "Stop," said he, "every man's house is sacred ; wait a little, and I will show you all."

The soldiers would have disregarded Mohamed's request ; but a murmur of indignation ran through the crowd of villagers at such disregard of their customs.

A few minutes elapsed, when Mohamed again appeared at his threshold : but now he had his gun with him ; and two little children were clinging to their father's knees, calling for notice from their long-absent parent.

The soldiers fell back, thinking he intended violence to them ;

but this was far from the poor man's thoughts. He had attached a string to the trigger of his gun, and passing it behind the stock, now put the muzzle to his head. The soldiers, perceiving his object, were rushing forward to seize him, when he cried out, "Tell the kaid that this alone remains for me to give—my blood. Let it be on his head!" and pulling the string, he fell a corpse.

The soldiers returned, and reported what had happened. "Awa?" (Is that all?) said the kaid; "so he lied after all: God have mercy upon his soul!" And thus was wound up the affair of the ancient vase.

CHAPTER XII.

Cross the river Ayasha—Tribe of Ibdowa—Moorish Letter—The Hara of Ibdowa—Cause of Degeneracy—Tortures—English turned Bedouins—Sheikh's Story—The British Sultan—Had-el-Gharbeea—Ancient Well—Tame Tortoises—Arab Ladies.

EARLY in the morning we crossed the river Ayasha, running north and south. The soil of the country around is particularly rich, though its surface is covered with flints.

At nine o'clock we came in sight of the thatched dwelling of the sheikh of the tribe of Ibdowa, situated on a rising ground above an Arab encampment. It was to this sheikh that the letter of the basha was addressed, desiring him to afford me every assistance in purchasing a mare of the finest breed.

As we approached the dwelling, I perceived the Arab chief. He was an elderly man, dressed in a handsome cloth kaftan, with a haik of the purest white; and was seated under the shade of the thatched roof, which projected some feet from the walls. I remained mounted at a short distance whilst the kaid of our party advanced, and, after respectfully saluting the chief, drew from his bosom the basha's letter, kissed it, and handed it to him.

The sheikh, having examined the seal, bestowed on it a hearty smack, and lifted the letter to his forehead. As he read the contents, he took one or two scrutinizing looks at my Nazareneship, and then remained wrapped for some moments in thought, as if wondering whether any other interpretation could be put upon the basha's recommendation to afford a Christian assistance in the purchase of a horse; in short, whether some deep matters of national importance were not concealed under a surface of horse-dealing.

What the exact import of this epistle was, I do not know: but as it may be interesting to the reader to have a specimen of a Moorish letter, I give the following translation of one which

I received from an important person among the saints, who are the hereditary nobility of this country :—

“ Praise to the One God !

“ The blessings of God Almighty on our Lord Mahomed, and upon his friends and followers be peace !

“ Praise be to God that sent his prophets as mediators between Him and His creatures, who redeemed his servants from the shades of ignorance and brought them to the light of the path of righteousness through the grace of God, who alone is worthy of all honour. No one on earth is like unto Him ; He gives not account of aught that He works ; mankind must render their account hereafter to Him ; He has sealed the missions of the prophets by the most excellent lord in the creation—Mahomed—the exalted above all. May God bless him, his followers, and friends, who are the most excellent among the nations, and ancient above all ! Peace be upon him that followeth the true path and that submits himself to God’s will.”

Which premised :—

“ From the most excellent Shereef of most noble ancestry, descended from a most renowned stock, son of our Lord Gelool, grandson of the great blessing unto mankind our Lord Aly Ben Gelool Alkadeery Al Hasàny, great-grandson of the Holy, the brilliant pole of the universe, renowned in all regions for his powerful protection to all that were afflicted or distressed by sea or by land, the Sheikh Mulai Aly Alkadeery.

“ We address one who is our friend and skilled both in the management of the pen and of the sword, and excelling in soundness of mind. We bless you from the depth of our heart ; and we pray that God protect and behold you, preserving you from all evil, and may God make you to see the true religion and take away all enemies, that hereafter heaven may be your residence.

“ If you inquire concerning us, we are in good health, and in happiness so long as you may enjoy it likewise,—thank God ! We pray Him that we may soon meet ; and He is prompt in answering our prayers.

“ Know, O beloved Nazarene ! that I have made acquaintance

with an intelligent Faquee, a learned astronomer, a timekeeper and professor of the sciences; his name is Seedy Mohamed Ben al Fadal Esoosy. I have examined and found such character in him as shall be esteemed and approved of by you for knowledge of the arts and sciences; and he has entreated me to present him to you.

"He shall, if it please God, be the means of your obtaining the large work of Ibn Batoota,* which exists in the Shereefian library of Wazàn; for the shereefs of that city esteem Seedy Esoosy as the pupil of their eye.

"I beg you to be kind to him; and, above all, not to overlook his thirst for knowledge; and may God, worthy of all praise and honour, inspire you with his wisdom.

"Do not suppose that I am forgetful about the horse. By the living God, I have not found what will suit you; but, *Eenshaallah*, your mind shall be set at rest. Write to us without fail! without fail! Peace!

"17th Jooniad, the first year, 1252 (September, 1836)."

When I supposed that the old sheikh had concluded his deliberations, I dismounted, and approached him with a due proportion of saláms. He rose to meet me, saying, "Welcome, O Nazarene! On my head be it to serve you, both in observance of my lord the Basha's orders, and because the English are known by us to be honourable men and friends to the Emsul-meen. But, young man," added the sheikh, "I fear you will not find in all this district a suitable animal."

"Where shall I seek a horse then, O my best of friends," I inquired, "if it be not in Ibdowa?"

"Listen," said he, "and understand. A few years past my tribe boasted of the finest bone and blood in the country. The care of a Bedouin towards his mare was like that of a mother towards her child; never was it allowed to quit his sight, and if he heard of a famous stallion, were it on the confines of the deserts of Soos, he would travel in the season, and pay any sum to have a good cross for the mare he gloried in. When in foal,

* This rare work of the ancient African geographer I subsequently obtained through the good offices of the 'learned timekeeper and professor of sciences.' A careful transcript of it was shortly afterwards presented by me to the Royal Asiatic Society in London.

no horse of bad form or below the standard height was allowed to pass within view of the hara. But, as with all mortals, our day of sorrow has come, and the wreck of our former pride is yet to be witnessed among some sorry mares, which I will point out in yonder field; now from age and neglect unworthy your purchase. Look," said he, "at their degraded offspring, those colts which my slave is driving; look at their form and size, they are mere pack animals."

"This is strange," I observed: "whence this neglect of your own interests?"

The old horse-breeder looked at our kaid, and they both sighed and shook their heads in unison.

"The reason," said the sheikh, lowering his voice, "is that of late years there is no security for property. If any Bedouin happen to possess a fine horse, and it reach the Sultan's ears, the animal is seized, and the owner receives no recompense. So, to escape this misfortune, he will rather cover his mare with the coarsest pony, than seek a sire worthy of its ancient and high-bred pedigree."

"Your case indeed is hard," said I.

"Hard!" said the Bedowee; "look at these scars on my ankles! See where the iron entered into my flesh! For seven long years was I kept in prison: and why? Ask him who put me there, and even he will tell you that I treated with hospitality all who visited Ibdowa, that I made large presents to kaid, basha, and sultan. In short, I was rich, and wealth* in this land of tyranny is a crime: and many more, alas! have suffered for this, as well as myself."

"Know, O Nazarene," he continued, "that our tribe are

* The most horrible tortures are resorted to for forcing confession of hidden wealth. The victim is put into a slow oven, or kept standing for weeks in a wooden dress; splinters are forced between the flesh and nail of the fingers; two fierce cats are put alive into his wide trowsers, and the breasts of his women are twisted by pincers. Young children have sometimes been squeezed to death under the arms of a powerful man, before the eyes of their parents.

A wealthy merchant at Tangier, whose "*auri sacra fames*" had led him to resist for a long time the cruel tortures that had been employed against him, yielded at length to the following trial:—He was placed in the corner of a room wherein a hungry lion was chained in such a manner as to be able to reach him with his claws, unless he held himself in a most constrained and unnatural position.

exempt from attending the sultan in his wars, or in his yearly progress through the country during the time of peace. This is granted us, because we have the privilege of escorting the annual caravan of pilgrims on their way to the holy Kaaba at Mecca. But now, alas! our services in this holy office are seldom required; and you English are the Bedouins of the present day, and in your ships and under your protection the Faithful are now conducted through the terrible sea to the regions of the East. You are the Bedouins, and well you deserve your wealth and power. I remember," continued the sheikh, "some hundred moons ago I was encamped with a party of friends on the coast of Reef; when we descried a boat leave a ship that was anchored at a little distance from the shore; and in it were seven Franks, who, having rowed to land, wandered along the beach. My companions seized their guns, and called upon me to follow them, determined on shooting the infidels. The sailors having observed this, made off to their boat and escaped, except one lad. He, not being able to reach the boat in time, was seized by my wild companions; who wished to kill him, or at least to keep him as a slave. On my coming up, I asked the lad of what nation he was. He understood my question, and replied, 'Ingliz;' and he looked at the same time so honest and so fearless, that I determined no one should harm the boy. So I spoke in his favour to those who had seized him; and when mild words failed, I swore by the beard of the Prophet, that rather than he should be injured, I would die in his defence. Having gained my point, I conducted him in safety to the water's side, where we made signals to his companions: they returned with the boat, and he embarked and was taken off in safety to the ship. I assure you, Christian, that I felt happier after having saved that boy's life, than at any other act I ever performed in my life."

"O virtuous sheikh!" said I, "God will repay you in the world to come."

Whilst thus conversing, the fatted lamb which the Arab chief had ordered to be killed, had been promptly metamorphosed into a stew, and was now placed before us in a large earthen dish by one of his attendants, whilst another bore a pile of flat loaves, greatly resembling Scotch bannock in form and taste.

During breakfast I spoke to the sheikh of the wonders of my

own country; and told him, to his astonishment, that we had many millions of Mahomedan subjects within our dominions; that our sultan was a young damsel, and that all the vast British empire was under her command. The old sheikh laughed heartily at the idea of a maiden sovereign, and asked if she was pretty, and if she appeared before men. I then gave a description of our Queen; and told him her Majesty had eyes like a gazelle and lips of coral, and that she could marry whom she pleased.

Upon this the Arab said, "Why does not the Sultan of Marocco, Mulai Abderrahman, ask her in marriage?"

A party of mounted Bedouins galloping up interrupted our conversation, and relieved me from the necessity of answering this difficult question.

The horsemen proved to be a son of the sheikh and his attendants, on their way to a marriage some half-day's journey from the Dooar of Ibdowa. They were all superbly dressed; their garments presenting a great contrast to their daily attire, which is in general of a mean appearance.

The sheikh, pointing to his son, who was a particularly handsome youth, said, "I have a good mind to send Abdallah to England. He is of Shereefian descent. Who knows but your Sultana might order him to wed her!"

Accompanied by the sheikh, I visited his brood mares; but they were all aged, and the colts under size. The sheikh told me that he knew not of any horse, within five days' journey, of the fine description I required; but added that he would with pleasure travel even to Wadnoon in search of a fit animal, if I could obtain from the sultan a permission for his absenting himself from the tribe.

The weather having become cool, we took leave of our host, who endeavoured to persuade us to stay all night. He loaded our animals with a present of three days' stock of fowls and other provision; and after a most friendly parting, we made the best of our way towards Oolad Sebaita.

About three in the afternoon we arrived at Had-al-Gharbeea, where we got into a hot current of wind from the north-east, which nearly suffocated us. This extreme heat was occasioned, as we ascertained afterwards, by the firing of a large tract of brushwood many miles distant. As we changed our course, we

suddenly emerged from the stifling current; and arriving at a well, slaked our parched throats, and those of our cattle, which had suffered even more than ourselves from the heat.

About five we pitched our tent amongst those of the sons of Sebaita. The sheikh, recognising me as a "son of the English," gave us a hearty reception; and having learnt the cause of my errand, troops of horses, mares and colts, were forthwith paraded before us; but all were of an inferior class of barb, and I was constrained to reject them.

This was a sad disappointment to me; for I well knew that, failing here, any further search would be useless; and therefore I was constrained, most unwillingly, to give up the object of my mission.

All that remained for me to do was to leave directions with the Sheikh of Sebaita to procure, if possible, a horse which should exactly answer to the description I gave him. He promised to exert himself to the utmost; but expressed his conviction, and so, indeed, did several other horse-dealers with whom I left similar instructions, that so perfect an animal as I required was not to be obtained.*

I wandered out in the evening with my gun, accompanied by the Hadj, and, in order to raise my spirits, which were somewhat of the lowest, blazed away among the partridges, which swarmed in the neighbourhood; whilst the Arabs, who witnessed the unheard of feat of killing a bird on the wing, actually screamed with delight at every successful shot.

Following a deep ravine, I arrived at an ancient well, which probably is of Portuguese construction; for within about half a mile of the spot I found the mutilated top of a large cross lying by the side of the way where two roads meet. A young woman was filling her pitcher at the well, and the Hadj stood aloof;

* In consequence of these instructions, a high-bred filly was after some delay procured, and sent to Tangier. It had many of the most valued qualifications of the breed; but it had never been broken in; and when subjected by me to the process, proved so violent a little creature, and put my neck so often into jeopardy, that it was deemed advisable to deprive her of the high honour which had been designed for her; and to renew the search for a more suitable animal. Subsequently, my father, when sent by her Majesty's government on a mission to the court of the sultan, at Fas, succeeded in obtaining a horse of the description required.

but I, being less scrupulous, approached, and thus addressed the maiden: "O heart-throbbing beauty! may I not claim a draught from your pitcher, since my forefathers, the Room,* once adorned with buildings the limpid fountain, now the blessing of your Dooar?"

The girl, who had her back towards me, hearing a strange voice, suddenly looked round; when, seeing an armed and strange form, she abandoned her pitcher, and ran up the hillside like an antelope; but shortly stopped to take breath, and have a peep at the object of her dread. "Fear not, O maiden!" I cried; "I will run away myself, rather than you should be disturbed."

Having laid down my gun to calm her fears, I examined the well. The water was as clear as crystal. As I stooped down, a couple of large tortoises immediately came to the surface, and, approaching the brink, seemed to beg for bread, of which they are very fond. The Moors conceive that these animals purify the water; and it is not uncommon to find them in wells, where they become domesticated, and are fed by the hands of charitable passengers.

The Arab lass, seeing I was a harmless animal, soon took courage and returned. I asked her if she could give any history of the well: but all she knew was that it had been built by the Room.

During our flirtation she told me there would be a great feast in the village that evening; as a certain Mrs. Kador Abdelmalek had been delivered of a fine boy; and that as her mother and sisters were going to attend the feast, she should be left at home. As I returned to our tent, I met a large party of women who were going to this feast, shouting and screaming.

The Arab women are never so shy as the Moors of the towns; and much less so when in presence of a Nazarene than before a man of their own race. So the ladies halted to have a good stare at me; and I, on my part, was quite prepared to bear the brunt of their jests and raillery. There were amongst

* That is to say, *Romans*; but the term is more especially applied by the Moors to the early Christians: and as they have no knowledge of any more ancient race ever occupying their country, all old ruins, which are not of Mahomedan construction, are ascribed by them to the Room.

them many fine girls, with large black pearly eyes, long eyelashes, and slender figures with little feet and ankles. Such are their charms. Some of them were dressed in caftans of red cloth, embroidered in gold or silver, over which was a clear muslin dress: the neck was covered with large strings of pearls and rude bits of unwrought coral; and they were encumbered with massive silver anklets and bracelets, little different in form and weight from the manacles and fetters of our criminals. Silk kerchiefs of Fas manufacture, of glaring colours, interwoven with golden thread, were placed one above the other in pyramidical form upon their heads; and a rich sash of silk encircled the waist above their hips. The poorer class were decently attired in a simple white frock, reaching to the knees, and girt with a small green band; the sleeves being large and open. Their hair was in loose curls, hanging down the back, but spangled with curious silver ornaments: all had their cheeks highly rouged, or rather painted rose-colour; and their chins tattooed in line and dot work. One dame I observed to have a patch of red leather on her cheeks. Their dark eyes were rendered yet darker by alkohol,* and the tips of their fingers and toes were dyed with henna. I put them in good humour by declaring my unbounded admiration of them all: and the compliment was fully returned by one of the party, who was in the way that ladies wish to be who love their lords, exclaiming, "O God grant that my child be as fair as you, Christian!" which, indeed, thought I to myself, is no extravagant prayer, seeing that I was tanned a very respectable brown. But everything is comparative; and among these dark complexioned ladies I have the great satisfaction of believing that I was esteemed a very paragon of fairness.

* A preparation made up chiefly of the sulphuret of antimony.

CHAPTER XIII.

Monà—Gipsies—Mahomed Biteewy, the Sheikh of the Marksmen—The Death of the Lion—Wild Fowl—A Long Shot—Joas the Gunsmith—The Marksmen—Ain Dahlia—Story of the Reefian—Pirates—Death of the Bridegroom—The Feud—The Traitor—Return to Tangier—The Market.

AT our tent we found that a handsome *Monà* had been provided for us. The sheikh was grumbling at the expense he had been put to; though I learnt the rogue had levied a heavy tax on our account upon the whole Dooar, amounting to three times the value of the *Monà*, and pocketed the surplus. It was with good reason, therefore, that his neighbours had given him the nick-name of *Haffer*, or the Precipice: his relentless extortion being a gulf into which their goods were cast without a hope of benefit or recovery.

During our absence he had been complaining loudly to my companion, but finding that the Don did not understand him, the sheikh expressed to me his astonishment that a bearded man should not be able to speak Arabic. Pointing to his son, he said, "Shame upon thee, Nazarene; see, that child is only six years old, and understands every word I say."

Ere we retired to rest we were visited by some gipsy women; for it seems, even in this far country, that wandering race is found following the same pursuits and trade as their brethren in Europe. They told me my fortune, and spoke both of the past and the future; of the former very vaguely, though one of them certainly made some capital hits. The future prospect was drawn as bright as the glittering piece of money I put into her hand: but I fear my faith in the augury is too slight to entitle me to its fulfilment, this being, as I understood from the dark-eyed sibyl, an indispensable point.

On the following morning we made an early start; and, having threaded the pass of *Had-al-Gharbea*, came in sight of

Dar-el-Clow, and the country around Sharf-el-Ahaab, our favourite sporting-ground. As the scene opened upon us, Sharky shouted a view-holloa, in which the Hadj joined most lustily; and goading on his mule till he reached my horse's side, he exclaimed, "*The well-fed** have rejoiced in our absence, but—may their great-grandfathers be burnt!—we will yet defile their graves. What say you, O Nazarene? let us pitch our tents hard by yonder lake, and send for old Irbeego and the rest of the pack."

"In truth," I replied, "I should be well pleased; but I cannot loiter on the road; for I have promised to be in Tangier this very night, if it please the Most High God."

"Remember you not," continued the Hadj, "that day of days we had near the hills of Shreewa, where we slew ten boars and six jackals? Ay, Sheikh Mohamed Biteewy headed the field well! and you and I were not among the slowest. By the truth of God, neither the cunning of Taleb Yooseff nor the sturdiness of the Father of Tusks availed that day; for the beaters kept good and steady line, and woe to the wild ones that showed themselves to the marksmen in the thicket, or to the swift-footed slokeest† on the plain.

"How the Moslems stared as the camels, laden with the trophies of our sport, passed through the streets of our city 'protected of the Lord.' O, much sin was devoured by the Nazarenes at Tangier after that day's sport: and for that they ought to thank Sheikh Mohamed Biteewy. His eye never fails. Yes, he is a sheikh of sheikhs!"

"How long," I inquired, "is it since Biteewy was made a sheikh among the marksmen?"

"'T is half an age," he replied, "yea, ever since the former famine, that Biteewy was created sheikh; and well I know how first he acquired fame. If it please thee, Nazarene, with God's aid, I will relate the story, as often have I heard him tell it to his brother sportsmen."

I assented, and the Hadj thus commenced:—

* One of the innumerable Arab appellations given to the boar.

† The *Slokee* resembles in form the sleugh-hound of Scotland. The similarity in the name given to this species of dog in the two languages is somewhat curious.

“ Sheikh Mohamed is a native of Tangier Baleea;* his father was a charcoal-burner, and God cut short his days when the beard of his son Mohamed first told that he had reached manhood. On his death-bed he called unto him his son, and said, ‘ My son, I have nothing to give thee but my blessing and the gun of thy fathers. It is thine now; and in a good cause it will never fail thee. I recommend thee, my child, to God the everlasting, to Mohamed, the prophet of God, and to Seedy Boaza, who has ever been the patron saint of our family; and I command thee, above all other things, to visit forthwith his tomb in the forest of Manura. Let neither man nor beast daunt thee; and Seedy Boaza will yet befriend a descendant of the Biteewys.’

“ He had scarcely finished these words when his hour came, and Mohamed, closing his father’s eyes, buried him ere the sun had set.

“ Early the following day Mohamed rose; and taking down his father’s gun, examined it, and found it to be in good condition: and then, like a dutiful son, he reflected on the words of his departed parent; and he swore, by the soul of his ancestors, that he would do as he had commanded him. So he prepared forthwith for his journey, filling his wallet with bread and raisins, and girding his garments about his loins; and out he set for the shrine of Seedy Boaza, in the vast forest of Manura, some five days’ journey south of Tangier.

“ On taking leave of his friends, they warned him of the perils he would have to undergo in passing through districts infested with robbers and wild animals; especially lions, which abounded in the forest of Manura.

“ Mohamed thanked them for their advice, but declared his determination to go on the pilgrimage to Seedy Boaza; and said he would trust to the saint’s protection against all mishap.

“ God favoured Mohamed on his journey; he reached the skirts of the forest of Manura on the evening of the fourth day: and as night was drawing on, the young pilgrim sought refuge and rest in a tree.

* Meaning ancient Tangier; a village opposite to the town of Tangier, and built near the site of the old Roman arsenal at the mouth of the river, of which there are still considerable remains. Tangier Baleea is believed by the Moors to be of much higher antiquity than the present town.

“ Dreadful were the howlings of wild beasts, and the roar of lions shook the ground :—and that is a sound, O Christian ! to make faint the heart of man ; be he never so stout.

“ Morning dawned ; and Mohamed, descending from his hiding-place, carefully examined the priming of his gun, which he had loaded with ball ; and with his long dagger ready in his girdle, he continued his journey.

“ He travelled on till the sun had reached mid-heaven, and told the hour of prayer ; and he stopped and performed his prostrations near a brook, and when he had offered up a prayer for his safety, he again proceeded on his perilous journey. As he trudged on, he reflected on what had been told him about the lions and other wild beasts, of the truth of which during the last night he had had fearful proof ; and as his mind dwelt upon such matters, he felt a creeping sensation come over him, and his hair stood erect, and the yellowness of his liver covered his skin.

“ ‘ O Seedy Boaza,’ he exclaimed, ‘ have I not put my trust in thee ? and is not this foreboding a warning which thou hast sent me ? It is : and I feel already that thy servant is in the presence of a foe.’

“ He had hardly finished these words when he heard a rustling in the wood, as of some large animal ; and presently, some thirty yards in front of him, a huge lion appeared in his path, fixing upon him his angry glance. Mohamed stopped short, and trembled from head to foot : but he soon took courage, and thus addressed the lion :—

“ ‘ O dread sultan of the forest, I am a poor man, and on a pilgrimage to Seedy Boaza—May God have mercy on his soul ! Prythee, let me pass ! They tell me lions are generous and brave—I believe it ; and I am indeed a harmless and inoffensive man.’

“ On hearing this the lion shook his mane, as if he was satisfied ; and turning round on the path, walked away from the man.

“ ‘ Thank God !’ said Mohamed : ‘ most true it is that the lion is a noble and sagacious animal.’

“ But he had scarcely uttered these words, when again the lion halted, and, turning round, looked at Mohamed full in the

face, and began to lash his tail. Then Mohamed thus again addressed the beast:—

“ ‘ O yellow-haired shereef, think not that I have spoken aught against thee. I was only praising thee because thou hadst pity upon God’s creature. I never thought or said that thou wast running away. I know thee to be brave: I know that thou fearest no living creature.’ ”

“ Upon this the lion left off lashing his tail, and turned away again: but still he kept upon the path along which Mohamed was journeying: and the young man, walking on with caution and as slowly as possible, ejaculated a prayer or two; but speaking very low, for fear of making the lion angry.

“ However, his prayers were soon put an end to: for all on a sudden the lion stopped for the third time, crouching with his head towards him, and his eyes glaring with fire, lashing his tail against his sides fiercer and fiercer.

“ ‘ What!’ said Mohamed, cocking his gun and holding it ready, ‘ must we then meet as foes? Know, O lion, that I have spoken to thee fair words; but know also that I am a man; and, being a man, above all the beasts of the earth.’ ”

“ The lion roared defiance, and sprung towards him. Mohamed took a steady aim and fired; and the huge yellow monster rolled at his feet. The ball had entered the centre of the forehead, and gone through his brain.

“ ‘ My father told me,’ exclaimed Mohamed, ‘ that in a good cause this gun would never fail. Seedy Boaza has given me a sharp trial, but has not forgotten the family of Biteewy.’ ”

“ Mohamed now continued his journey; and at every rustle of the leaves he expected another encounter with some dread animal; but God befriended him; and he arrived without further harm in sight of the shrine of his patron saint: and, taking off his shoes, he approached the holy ground. As he drew near, he perceived a numerous party of huntsmen, whose long guns bristled in the neighbourhood of the sanctuary: and the oldest man of the party, stepping forward, thus addressed him:—

“ ‘ O stranger, I see that thou comest from afar! Where are thy followers?’ ”

“ Mohamed pointed to his gun.

“ ‘ What ! ’ exclaimed the old hunter, ‘ dost thou mean that thou camest hither alone ? Impossible ! Lions infest the forest ; dangers beset the sons of men. We are numerous ; we have killed lions ere we reached Seedy Boaza’s tomb. Speak then the truth, O stranger, that we may hear and understand.’ ”

“ ‘ I am from Tangier,’ said Mohamed ; ‘ I am alone. I have met a lion : I have slain him. I have come to worship at this shrine ; and to-morrow I return to the house of my fathers.’ ”

“ ‘ If thou speakest the truth,’ said one of the hunters, ‘ conduct us to the lion thou hast slain.’ ”

“ Mohamed made no reply ; but led the way to the spot where the sultan of the forest lay dead. The hunters examined the lion’s head for a good while ; and then they embraced Mohamed, and called him Sheikh : and each hunter parted with some portion of his raiment and gave it to him ; and some gave him money. And they loaded the young pilgrim with their favours ; and they made him accompany them to ‘ their village, which was distant some two days’ journey from the tomb of the saint.

“ From that time Mohamed became a sheikh ; and travelled throughout the country, teaching the young men to become marksmen. And so his fame spread far and wide, and his purse became full of gold. So he returned to the land of his forefathers, and took unto himself a wife ; and ever since then Mohamed has lived happily, reflecting on the words of his father, and on the power of Seedy Boaza.”

As we approached Dar-el-Clow, innumerable flocks of wild fowl were flying over head ; and we saw a native sportsman make a most successful shot at a flight of ducks that had settled, killing three, which he brought to us for sale. The man had fired at a distance of not less than a hundred and thirty yards ; and, although his shot were very large, the range was extraordinary.

On examining his gun I found the name Joaõ faintly engraved on the barrel, with a date, which was illegible. This Joaõ was a Portuguese, who had been taken prisoner by the Moors at the last battle with the Christians, not far from Alcassar Kebeer, in the year when their king Sebastian was

killed in the action; although some fond Portuguese suppose that he is even to this day a wandering fugitive in the wilds of Barbary!

Joaõ was conducted, with other of his fellow-prisoners, to the royal residence of Meknas; and it is related that horrid cruelties were practised upon the Christians. One of the methods of torture employed was, to build them alive into the city walls, which were under repair at the time. Whitened bones of these and of former Christian prisoners are yet to be seen in the town walls of Meknas, and they say in those of Sallee also. When Joaõ's turn came, he begged for mercy; telling his persecutors that he was a gunsmith; and, if they would spare him, he would make a weapon which should be worthy the sultan of Marocco himself. Information was forthwith given to the sultan of Joaõ's handicraft; upon which the potentate ordered that the life of this Nazarene should be spared, if he could fulfil his promise.

Joaõ now requested that a smith's shop and utensils should be furnished him; and that no person should be allowed to overlook him while at work. The Nazarene artisan surpassed the expectation of the sultan. The barrel was of twisted iron, a mode of construction said to be unknown at that time in Marocco. As a reward for his services, Joaõ was appointed his majesty's gunsmith; and his fame became great through this country; and, as the Hadj, who was the gunsmith's biographer, expressed himself, the hearts of all in the same trade "were blackened with envy:" so they sought to ruin the Christian favourite. But Joaõ continued to take the precaution of working alone; and thus prevented the mysteries of his art from being discovered.

After a considerable lapse of time, however, the former gunsmith of his Shereefian Majesty petitioned to be restored to his office; declaring that he could make as good a gun as the Nazarene. The Sultan promised to reinstate him if he could make good his words; but to punish him severely, if he did not rival the Nazarene.

Now Joaõ, it appears, was very particular about having his shop frequently whitewashed; for the Sultan himself used to visit the favourite artist while at work. His predecessor, having endeavoured in vain to obtain admittance, and thus be enabled

to pry into the craft of the Portuguese, at length bribed the whitewasher, who was a Jew, to lend him his dress and brushes, and to let him know when next the Nazarene required his shop to be whitewashed.

The stratagem succeeded: for whilst Joaõ was busy at work, the Moor in disguise watched the process by which he formed the twisted barrel. Rejoicing at his success, the malle^m * returned to his shop; and shortly afterwards presented a twisted gun-barrel to the Sultan, which was declared even superior to that of Joaõ: upon which his Shereefian Highness reinstated him in his former office, and the Christian was dismissed.

Joaõ mourned over his disgrace: but when he learned the deception which had been practised by the Moorish gunsmith, he was seized with despair, and, as the story goes, shot himself. His fame, however, is immortalized amongst all Moorish sportsmen, who prize the guns marked with his name above all others; and frequently their boar-hounds are called after the famous craftsman.

It was with barrels made by Joaõ that the famous marksmen Seedy Tayeb and Ben Geloön are said to have performed such incredible shooting feats.

It is related that, on one occasion, when these two marksmen, who had just returned from a hunting excursion, were seated together, discussing the shots that had been made during the day, Seedy Tayeb challenged Geloön to fire a shot with him. Geloön made no reply; but called to a young lad who was playing at foot-ball some fifty yards from them. The youth threw back the hood of his jelab, that he might approach him with due respect, for he was a Shereef: upon which, seizing his gun, he aimed at the lad and fired. The boy put his hand immediately to his head.

“Has any one hurt you?” cried Geloön. “Let us see your head.”

The boy came up, and there was a slight graze where the ball had passed.

“What think you of that shot?” said Geloön to Seedy Tayeb. “Fire, if you can, one like it, at any of God’s creatures, and yet do him no harm.”

* Artisan.

Tayeb took his gun, and fired at the lad as he left them to return to his playfellows. This time the boy gave a slight scream, and put his hand to his ear.

“What’s the matter?” cried Tayeb.

“Oh,” said the boy, “somebody has torn my ear!”

The ball had shot away his large Moorish ear-ring.

We proceeded by the route we had formerly travelled until we came to Ain Dàhlia; where we were induced to take shelter in a neighbouring cave from the scorching rays of a midsummer sun. Here we were joined by a party of travellers going to Arzyla: and amongst them was one whose fine manly countenance and tall figure immediately attracted our notice. The Hadj told me he was a native of Reef, and an old acquaintance of his; but that of late years, in consequence of a feud, he had been obliged to leave his country. I beckoned to the man; and offering him some bread and fruit, of which we were making our meal, requested him to beguile the time by relating his adventures. He did so as follows:—

“O son of the English, I know your tribe are worthy of trust; and will therefore venture to speak of deeds of blood: but I pray thee to bridle thy tongue among the townsfolk; and let what thou shalt hear remain in thy secret heart. My father died when I was yet a child, leaving my mother with two sons, my brother and myself. He was about ten years older than I, and a finer fellow never breathed our mountain air. He was the raees of a large boat, carrying twenty oars, and capable of holding fifty armed men, if required to attack any trading vessels of the Nazarenes which might be becalmed off our coast or driven upon it. Often, as a lad, have I accompanied my brave brother—God have mercy on his soul!—in these expeditions; and dreadful was the conflict if the Nazarene happened to be armed. Our numbers, however, almost always prevailed: and, victory being gained, we put to death both crew and passengers, throwing their bodies overboard; but first taking the precaution to shave their heads, mutilate their faces, and strip their bodies, so that they might not be recognised.

“In our village there was a beautiful girl, a daughter of one of the wealthiest of our tribe. Her beauty was known to every man, for in Reef there is more confidence in the virtue of our

women than with the people of towns ; and therefore we allow them to go unveiled.

“ My brother saw the maiden ; and although the flame of love was alike kindled in the breast of the beautiful Ayèsha, his peace of mind was gone ; for it was in vain he sought the girl in marriage from her father—she was promised to a wealthier man.

“ Her marriage-day arrived, and the guests had assembled to feast and make merry. My brother was invited, but did not arrive until the end of the feast ; and then, pale and haggard, he walked into the circle where the bridegroom was sitting, and thus addressed him :—‘ Know, O my rival, that God must this day judge between you and me. She whom you have chosen must be mine or no man’s ; say, wilt thou yield her to me, or dost thou prefer that our blood should run ? ’ The bridegroom called on the guests to assist him : a struggle ensued ; the bridegroom was stabbed to the heart, and near him soon lay my lifeless brother, shot by the pistol of one of the bridegroom’s relatives.

“ I was present at this horrid scene, but had not then completed my twelfth year ; nor had I strength to resent the injury.

“ In Reef, let it be known to you, O Christian ! every man’s gun is his law. We acknowledge no chief, no magistrate. The sultan himself is merely acknowledged in our country as the head of our religion.

“ My mother, who doted upon her elder son, mourned for him to the day of her death : never did she cease, while we ate our meals together, to rebuke me for want of spirit in not seeking to revenge the blood of my brother : and, as I grew older, often did she taunt me in bitter words, lamenting that God should have given her such a worthless son as myself.

“ All these sayings I kept secret in my heart ; and long had I determined to revenge my brother’s death. But I was yet too young to cope with the two surviving brothers of the murdered bridegroom : and well I knew that if I were unable to kill them both in one day, my own doom would be certain.

“ At sixteen I married one whom I loved ; and who, thank God, is yet alive, and has blessed me with many sons ; who are ready to revenge the murder of their father, if such, after all, should be my fate.

“To my wife I confided my intentions of revenge. In vain did she beg of me to desist from the spilling of blood; and in vain also did the brothers of the murdered man, thinking I was yet too young to thirst after revenge, offer the price of blood to the large amount of two hundred *mitzàkal*. I spurned their offer, saying, ‘God’s will be done, both as to the past and the future.’

“One day I received information that one of the brothers intended to go to a neighbouring market, whilst the other would remain in the village. This separation was all that I wished for; and I at once determined upon the execution of what I had so long designed.

“On meeting at our mid-day meal my mother and wife, I said to my mother, ‘Prepare all we possess of value, and make ready for a flight to the sanctuary of Mulai Abd-Selam. After to-morrow Reef can no longer be our home.’

“My mother understood my words, and, falling on my neck, called me for the first time her dear son; and then taking down my brother’s gun, which had hung unused and dusty for many a day on the walls of our house, she blessed it, and offered up a prayer for my success. My wife, poor creature, on the contrary, never ceased to weep, fearing for me, and her own boys too, the fatal consequences of renewing the feud.

“The following morning, accompanied by my wife, I went to a spot where the villagers were accustomed to assemble; taking with me my gun, which, as thou knowest, Christian, is seldom out of a Reefian’s hand. Here I learned that one of the brothers had already gone to a market some three hours distant from our village; and not far from me I saw the other brother seated near an open metamor,* the contents of which he was inspecting. Two other persons only were present, most of the villagers having gone to the market.

“I observed the object of my revenge look round every now and then, as if watching my movements; for both he and his brother, I knew, had become suspicious of me. Taking advan-

* The underground granaries yet in universal use by the Moors of West Barbary, being the same in form and name as those introduced into Western Europe by the old conquering Saracens; and which have so strangely puzzled both antiquaries and etymologists.

tage of a moment when his back was turned towards me, I took off my jelab and put it over my wife, whose teeth were chattering with fright; and desired her to sit still as she valued my life. Then, taking my gun, I approached him, dodging so as to avoid detection; he looked round more than once towards the place where I had been sitting, but perceiving a figure seated in my dress, he thought I had not moved. Having got within fifteen paces of my object, I presented my gun and shot him through the back. Several people came out on hearing the report; but, having perceived the cause, not a word was said. They knew I had done my duty as a Reefian.

“Returning to my wife, I resumed my dress, and desired her to hasten to our hut and tell my mother what I had done; then to saddle the mule and ass, and, taking the best of our effects, to set out on the journey to Mulai Abd-Selam. I told her to assure my mother that I would join them before night. Reloading my gun, I now hastened in the direction of the market; and met my victim's brother returning with other Reefians: they inquired whither I was going so fast. I told them that we were in want of salt at the house, and I was hastening to market that I might buy some and return before night. One of the party, telling me I should be late, offered to share his. I desired only an excuse for joining them, and accepted his offer. Then, watching my opportunity, I fell back a little behind the rest, and shot the remaining brother through the back. His companions, none of whom were related to him by blood, merely fired their guns off, not aiming at me; for too prudent is a Reefian to commence a feud without a sufficient cause.

“At night I joined my wife and mother, and, having remained some days at Mulai Abd-Selam's tomb, we came to the neighbourhood of Tangier, near which place we have dwelt ever since; and are now subject to the laws of our Prophet and the Prince of Believers.

“Only on one occasion has my life been attempted by a cousin of my former enemies; who, too dastardly to come himself, hired for a large sum a Reefian who had formerly been my friend. This man undertook to seek me in my own house, eat my bread, and murder me when the occasion offered. The very day the murderous hireling arrived I was warned by my wife, who told me

she liked not his looks. I did not listen to her counsel, but continued to treat my former friend with hospitality : until one day my wife brought me a bit of paper she had found in his wallet. On it was written the contract for my blood, at the price of one hundred and fifty mitzàkal. Struck with indignation at the treachery, I went immediately to the villain; showed him the proof of his guilt; and seizing his gun and dagger, I broke them both into pieces; telling him that his having eaten with me the bread of peace was his sole security against my delivering him up to the hands of justice.

“Since that time I have lived in peace; and now, thank God, have many a stout heart under my roof to revenge, if need be, their father’s quarrel.”

The Reefian having finished his tale, we remounted, and arrived at Tangier about the *Asa*, or hour of evening prayer.

It was market-day, and the large Sok was crowded with villagers from the neighbouring hills, and Arabs with their camels from the plains, forming a gay and busy scene. As we passed to our dwellings we were hailed with the kindly salutations of many of our Moorish friends, gaily crying out to us, “*Hamdoolillah Salamah*” (we thank God for your safe return).

CHAPTER XIV.—(APPENDIX.)

John Davidson—His Qualifications and Personal Appearance—Superstitious Feelings—Imprudence—Moorish Suspicions—Reception by the Sultan—Reaches Wadnoon—Murdered at Swekeya—Mr. Willshire's Letter—The Sheikh's Letter—Suggestions.

JOHN DAVIDSON deserves to be placed high in the long list of those energetic travellers who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of science. In the year 1835, he formed the bold design of penetrating to Timbuctoo by the direct route from Wadnoon—a line of approach never before attempted by any European, and one which it was well known was beset with imminent danger.

Few persons could have been better fitted than Davidson for this arduous undertaking. He was a man of high moral and personal courage, combined with great calmness of temper and affability of manner. He possessed a general knowledge upon most subjects, and very considerable skill in chemistry and medicine; acquirements which are of the greatest importance to the traveller in those countries, and which, even if he does not possess them, he is frequently obliged to profess; for the Nazarene is always looked upon as a skilful doctor, and to refuse the assistance of his art would be attributed by the Africans to worse motives than mere ignorance.

Davidson was a fine-looking man, with an extremely intelligent countenance, and an expression that would tell even the savage of Africa that he was an honourable and brave man: the fairness of his skin and the redness of his hair were, however, somewhat against him in the estimation of the sunburnt inhabitants of Africa: for though among the people of the city of Fas, and those of the northern districts of West Barbary, the "*Zaar*" (the fair), as they are called, are frequently to be found, being probably the descendants of the large body of Goths who crossed the Straits, still the word *Zaar* is used as an

opprobrious term; the prejudice being that a fair man is not to be depended upon.

Davidson was a tolerable linguist; but his knowledge of Arabic, especially of the Mogrebbin dialect, was very limited; and on this account he was obliged to engage a Hebrew of Tetuan to accompany him as interpreter to the court at Marocco.

While residing at Wadnoon he suffered dreadfully from a disease brought on by the hot poisonous wind called *simoom*, which first attacked his eyes with ophthalmia, and then his throat; the palate falling, as he expressed himself. Finding no relief from his own remedies, he was obliged to resort to those of the country, which consisted in a stick covered with tar being poked down his throat, and his inhaling the fumes of boiled tar; and such were his sufferings, that in one of his letters he writes, "I would readily step into the grave."

In the work entitled 'John Davidson's African Journal,' printed by his brother for private circulation, I find in a note the following vivid description of the *simoom*, written by the traveller at the time:—

"To describe this awful scourge of the desert defies all the powers of language. The pencil, assisted by the pen, might perhaps afford a faint idea of it. Winged with the whirlwind and charioted in thunder, it urged its fiery course, blasting all nature with its death-fraught breath. It was accompanied by a line of vivid light that looked like a train of fire, whose murky smoke filled the whole wide expanse, and made its horrors only the more vivid. The eye of man, and the voice of beast, were both raised to heaven, and both then fell upon the earth. Against this sand-tempest all the fortitude of man fails, and all his efforts are vain. To Providence alone must he look. It passed us, burying one of my camels. As soon as we rose from the earth, with uplifted hands to heaven for its preservation, we awoke to fresh horrors. Its parching tongue had lapped the water from our water-skins, and having escaped the fiery hour, we had to fear the still more awful death from thirst."

Davidson was not skilled in the use of fire-arms; which accomplishment, indeed, often gains a stranger the friendship of barbarians, either through fear of your prowess or respect for you as a warrior. He was of a very fanciful disposition, and

often indulged in superstitious feelings ; which, though he affected to laugh at them, had, I suspect, much influence on his mind.

I accompanied this ill-fated traveller as far as the town of Rabat, a port of Marocco, about 120 miles south of Tangier ; and was most anxious to have proceeded with him throughout his entire journey ; but, fortunately for me, my family insisted upon my giving up the design. Had I continued with him, my fate must have been the same as his.

On taking leave of him at Rabat, I gave him a pistol-holster, which I used to wear slung, after the Turkish fashion, at my side, and which Davidson had taken a fancy to. This holster had belonged to a native of Tunis, who was supposed to have taken an active part in the murder of Laing, the African traveller. On Davidson's arrival at Mogador, he wrote to me to say that Laing's ghost had appeared to him, and rebuked him for wearing the holster of the pistol that belonged to his murderer ; and that, owing to this warning, he was about to send me my gift back. Davidson, at times, dwelt much upon what had been told him by some fortune-telling woman in Russia, respecting his life and death, foretelling, as he said, many things that had since come to pass ; and he particularly alluded to her prophecy of his death in Africa, at a period, as I understood him, when he had no intention of penetrating into the interior.

Davidson started from the very first in a manner which tended to throw impediments in his way. He had published to the world his intended journey ; and the fame of his coming was bruited about at Gibraltar long before he appeared : and that famous Rock has always been a hotbed for engendering mischievous reports ; which, if connected in any way with Marocco, are sure to find their way over the Straits, and thence to the court at Marocco, in an exaggerated and distorted form. He had been received at Gibraltar with great kindness by the authorities and inhabitants, and fêted during the time he was there ; a compliment which the enterprising traveller well deserved ; but such hospitality was ill-timed and unfortunate, for the greater the importance given at Gibraltar to his character and proceedings, the more impediments was he certain to meet with on the other side of the Straits : and thus it proved ; for from that time

he was looked upon by the Moors as an agent sent by the British government to inquire into the state of the country, its productions and capabilities; and it is more than probable they suspected that his mission was connected with plans of future conquests.

Davidson brought with him a letter of recommendation from his Majesty William IV. to the Sultan of Marocco,* stating that the object of his travels was purely scientific. The delivery of this letter to the Sultan was in itself an unwise measure; for it stamped the bearer as an agent of the British government, and consequently Davidson was looked upon with a jealous and suspicious eye by the Moorish court. The Sultan of Marocco little knows or cares about scientific pursuits. It would never enter into the mind of a Moor, not even the most enlightened, that any man would expose his life by travelling through the wild tracts of West Barbary, or attempt to penetrate into the land of deserts and death, solely for the love of travel and science. Gain, the Moor would argue, must be his object; and for this alone, would he conclude, the Englishman was travelling in countries where he exposed his life.

To a like course of reasoning among the wealthy merchants of Fas and Tâfilelt may the death of the unfortunate traveller be attributed. These traders, and others of the principal towns of Marocco, have long held in their hands the monopoly of the trade of Northern Africa, consisting in gold-dust, ivory, ostrich-feathers, &c. With what eyes must they, then, have viewed the man whom they considered the emissary of a great commercial nation, with whom these goods have long been an object of traffic! The natural inference of these Moors would be—This man is going into the interior to enter into an arrangement with agents there for sending the productions of the country to some more direct port of export than those of Marocco; and if he succeed in this object, he will destroy our trade.

* Davidson was sent from Gibraltar to Tangier in his Majesty's brig-of-war *Jaseur*; and was landed under a salute of eleven guns, as bearer of a royal letter. Those who conferred this mark of honour on the worthy traveller thought that they were rendering him a service by raising his importance in the eyes of the Moors; but I remember feeling, as I heard the roar of the cannon echoed back by the hills—over which he was so soon to pass, never to return—that these were the death-guns of the gallant traveller.

Impressed with views such as these, and callous in the commission of crime, it is easy to suppose that these traders would have endeavoured to prevent, either by fair means or foul, the return of such a traveller to his own country, as his success might ensure their ruin.

If the Sultan and his court, who seemed to have taken an interest in Davidson during his stay at the city of Marocco in consequence of his engaging manners and valuable acquirements, felt disposed to humour the Nazarene, and to promote a scheme which they must have looked upon, even when viewing it more favourably, as the wild fancy of a mad infidel, other enemies were at work; and these, no doubt, were the Maroquine merchants, who necessarily viewed with a jealous eye every step Davidson took towards the interior.

The Sultan warned the traveller not to attempt to penetrate farther than those regions where his control extended; and Davidson even received an order not to go beyond Tarudant, as he himself stated to his brother, in his letter of the 7th March, 1836: and though a kind of promise was held out to him that facilities would be subsequently rendered him for putting his journey to Timbuctoo into execution, I very much doubt the sincerity of such a promise; or that even with the Sultan's authority and assistance he would ever have proceeded farther than Wadnoon. A flat refusal is not the Moor's policy; but procrastination and awaiting the effect of events is their safe and wily system.

When Davidson prosecuted his journey under the countenance of the sheikh, and not that of the Sultan, all responsibility was removed from the Sultan's shoulders, even could it have been proved that that potentate had received some intimation of the murderous scheme of the Tâfilelt traders: for, should the British government have in any way taken up the circumstances connected with Davidson's death, the Sultan could have clearly shown that he had protested against the wild scheme in which the Englishman had embarked.

Greatly is it to be lamented that he did not listen to the counsels of those who foresaw the danger of the plan he had formed for penetrating into the interior, rather than to the advice and sanguine expectations held out by many of his

friends; who thought that the difficulties which were pointed out to him were put forward with other motives than those of a hearty desire for the success of the spirited traveller. In several letters which I received from him, when he was residing at the court of Marocco and at the port of Wadnoon, he frankly admitted the soundness of the advice which had been given to him on this subject by my father and several other persons well enabled to form a correct opinion. Most painful indeed was the tenour of some of these letters; for though Davidson possessed a wonderful elasticity of spirits and undaunted determination, still, foreseeing when too late the full extent of the dangers that must attend him, he predicted his own certain doom: but at the same time he said, "I will not turn back, to be pointed at by the world as the man who had undertaken to accomplish what he dared not even attempt."

Davidson arrived at Tangier on the 13th of November, 1835; where he remained for some weeks awaiting the answer of the Sultan for permission to proceed on his journey.

The Sultan having at length replied to his application by desiring him to come to the city of Marocco, and having provided him with an escort of ten horsemen, as a compliment to the bearer of a king's letter, he started on the 26th of December, accompanied by Mr. J. Crusenstolpe,* the Swedish vice-consul, and myself. The first town we visited was Laraiche, which we left on the 29th, and reached Mehedeea, a small seaport town, on the 1st of January, 1836, and on the 2nd arrived at Rabat, where, on the 5th, Mr. Crusenstolpe and myself took leave of the traveller, and returned to Tangier.

Davidson's next point was Dar-al-baida. The intermediate country was then in a disturbed state; and a regular escort of four hundred cavalry was appointed to attend all travellers to and fro on stated days of the week. Davidson mistook the nature of this numerous escort; and imagined that it had been sent by the Sultan as a compliment to himself.

From Dar-al-baida he journeyed to Azamor; and arrived at Marocco on the 13th of January. The Sultan gave him an

* This gentleman, who is a profound Arabic scholar, has lately published an excellent translation of the Koran into Swedish, accompanied by valuable notes explanatory of the laws and customs of the Mohamedans.

audience; and on more than one occasion, I believe, received him in private. He made him a present of a horse, and all such other gifts as are usually bestowed on persons visiting that court; and also a regular supply of provisions for himself and attendants.

Davidson acquired great fame in the capital as a medical man, and attended the first people of the court, as well as the ladies of the sultan's harem, and other ladies of note: and in addition to this, performed numerous acts of charity in the line of his profession.

The sultan endeavoured to persuade him to remain at Marocco as his medical adviser; and no doubt he would have been well treated in that capacity: but the traveller would not accede to this proposal: he obtained his leave of audience on the 17th of February, and proceeded on his journey. He crossed part of the Atlas Mountains; visited a singular and warlike tribe of Jews there, who are almost independent of the sultan; and arrived at Mogador on the 25th of February; from which port he departed on the 23rd of March, and arrived at Wadnoon, viâ Agadeer, on the 22nd of April. After a long and most vexatious detention at Wadnoon, suffering from climate and other causes, he entered into a pecuniary arrangement with the sheikh for prosecuting his journey to Timbuctoo; and at length, about the middle of November, set forward on his ill-fated journey.

Davidson is supposed to have been murdered at Swekeya* by a party of fifteen persons, of the tribe of El Harib, whilst awaiting the caravan, having at this time with him only twelve of the Tajacauth tribe. The Sheikh Beyruche, in a letter which he addressed to Mr. Willshire, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Mogador, announcing the death of the Tibeeb (Doctor), as Davidson was called, says:—

“El Harib did not go that route but to kill him; and we have heard that the merchants of Tâfilelt had given money to El Harib to murder him. Tâfilelt is only distant one or two days' journey from the usual place of abode of the tribe of El Harib.”

The sheikh, in a subsequent letter, retracted this assertion

* Swekeya is, I believe, near the southern confines of Eguedec, sixteen days' journey from Tatta, and ten from Toadaguy.

about the guilt of the Tâfilelt merchants ; and this was a very natural course for him to take ; for the deed of blood was done, and could not be remedied ; and though he imprudently, at the first, proclaimed the guilt of El Harib, and at one time even threatened to be revenged on that tribe for their perfidy ; on reflection he must have been aware that, should his accusation and threats reach the ears of the Tâfilelt people, it would create him many and powerful enemies. The Arab's policy is always to employ soft words, however much they may be contradicted by his actions.

The following extracts from letters written on the subject by Mr. Willshire give, there is every reason to suppose, the most correct details of the murder of the poor traveller :—

“ Mr. Davidson and party were first met by some of the tribes of Howbet and Ait Atta, who took from him some money, and allowed the party to proceed. The party reached Swekeya ; where they rested, to wait for the caravan to come up. On the third day, a party of fifteen or more of the tribe of El Harib arrived at the resting-place ; and, after the usual salutations, inquired of Mohamed El Abd to show him the watering-place ; who, leaving his musket behind, and the rest of the Harib sitting down, accompanied him over the sand-hills ; and when out of sight, hearing a report of a musket, Mohamed El Abd asked what had been done ; when the Harib replied, his party had shot the Christian. He complained bitterly, and said he would rather they had murdered him. It is stated, that when Mohamed El Abd went away, one of the Harib pretended to examine his gun ; and seized the opportunity to take aim, and shot Mr. Davidson, who was sitting on the ground a short distance from the party ; who immediately began to plunder and seize everything belonging to Mr. Davidson, allowing Mohamed El Abd to keep possession of what property belonged to him, obliging him first to make oath on the Koran that the caravan was not met by the Harib, but had gone on to Timbuctoo, with which Abú, the companion of Mr. Davidson, travelled.”

In another account it is stated that when the Harib shot Davidson, they proceeded to plunder his baggage, tearing and destroying all his *books and papers*.

From these statements it evidently appears that the Harib had

other views than mere plunder; for those who made the first attack were satisfied with robbing the travellers; but the Harib, unprovoked by any resistance, murdered the unfortunate Christian, and then destroyed *all his books and papers*; whilst they allowed "*Mohamed El Abd to keep possession of what property belonged to him*;" and I have little doubt that those who hired these ruffians had given them especial instructions not only to make away with the traveller, but to destroy all his papers; which they would fear might contain information likely to be injurious to their trade, should they reach the Nazarenes. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that most of his other property has been recovered: and very lately I had the melancholy satisfaction of receiving, through the kindness of the brother of the lamented traveller, a small silver pedometer which I had lent him. There is no reason to believe that there was any treachery on the part of the Sheikh Beyruche, or of the Arabs attending Davidson, notwithstanding the apparent want of spirit of the Tajacauth who accompanied him, in revenging upon the Harib, on the spot, the death of their Nazarene companion. It was against their interest to have been a party to the murder, putting aside the friendship that had subsisted between the Sheikh and Davidson. The plain language in which the former justifies his conduct, in a letter addressed by him to a certain Sidi Hadj Abibe, is sufficient, I think, to exculpate him from having been privy to the murder or robbery.

The following is an extract from this letter:—

"The words you report, that we had arranged with the Harib to betray him (Davidson)—such doings are not our ways; nor could we degrade ourselves to do so; every one, God will reckon with for the words he utters.

"For four days we neither ate nor drank, and have sworn by all that is sacred to be revenged. Whenever the Harib are to be found, in the tents or on the road, our tribe shall plunder and kill them.

"As regards the property of the Tibeeb, if any articles remain in the hands of the Tajacauths, they will reach you. God knows how much we have grieved about him; but, God be praised, we did not leave anything undone for the safety of the Tibeeb. We did not think the Harib would turn traitors to any person sent

by us. This has been done by the traders of Tâfilelt, who had bribed the Harib to kill him. God's will be done: the facts will be known when the two horsemen return, whom we have despatched to Tajacauth, and which will be sent to you.—Peace.”

The advice given to Davidson, by those who were sincerely desirous that he should undertake his perilous journey in the manner least likely to endanger his life, was, that he should have totally abandoned his first plan; that he should have even returned to England, and encouraged a rumour that he had altogether given up the idea of his African travels, confiding alone to the most trustworthy persons his future mode of proceeding; which, should he persist in the scheme of penetrating to Timbuctoo through West Barbary, was sketched out for him as follows:—

“To have remained in England until he was no longer talked of as the African traveller, and during that time to have improved his knowledge of the Arabic: on leaving England, to have changed his name, which was already too well known; to have avoided Gibraltar and Tangier, where many persons would have recognised him, and to have embarked on board a sailing vessel for Mogador, of which there are several that leave London every year, and to have landed at that port, in the capacity of a petty trader possessing some little knowledge of medicine, but at the same time to have been careful not to have rendered himself conspicuous by the practice of his art so as to have dazzled the natives, or to have caused his name to have been talked of by the Frank merchants or agents for Foreign Powers; among whom, as in every small town, there would always be found busy-bodies, who can do no good, but much harm. We also recommended that he should have settled at Mogador for some time, studying the Mogrebbin dialect, and picking up, if possible, the language of the African tribes through which he would have to pass, and acquiring at the same time information respecting the interior, and a knowledge of the habits and character of the people; and whilst carrying on a petty trade, he should have endeavoured to have formed acquaintances, and make friends with the Arabs who accompany the kafflas.”

To Mr. Willshire, the British Vice-Consul at Mogador, he might have confided his plans, and I know no man in Marocco more capable of giving sound advice to the traveller in those regions, or more zealous in rendering every service in his power for the benefit of geographical knowledge. Mr. Willshire is held in high repute by the natives, among whom, no doubt, he has many good friends: in fact I believe Davidson was indebted to him, on more than one occasion, for introductions to those who afterwards proved his more worthy acquaintances.

After having obtained a sufficient knowledge of the interior, and having established commercial connections with the traders, he might have joined a kaffla for the ostensible purpose of purchasing goods on his own account; assuming for safety, and to avoid notoriety, the dress of the country, and taking with him only such necessaries of life as would not have excited the avarice or curiosity of the Arabs: and, above all, he should have travelled with some native of good character, who was respected by his brethren, and with whom he should have previously formed a tie of friendship, or to whom he had rendered some important medical service: for, faithless and treacherous as are the tribes of North Africa, like most half-civilized people, and much as they hold the Nazarene in detestation, yet I could bring forward instances, which have occurred to myself, where these men have proved that they were worthy of a Christian's friendship and confidence; and that too at moments when life and death were at stake, and when they were opposed to those of their own faith, and to superior numbers. But had I not in these cases formed a previous tie of friendship, and had I not broken the bread and drank the milk of peace with them, my protectors would have been the first, under similar circumstances, to have turned their arms against the adversary of their faith.

Had Davidson prudently adopted measures such as these, he could have penetrated into the interior to Timbuctoo, or even farther if he had pleased: nobody would have heard of his journey; or if they had, they would not have thought it worth while to murder a mere petty trader of Mogador, who did not interfere in any way with them; and who had every appearance of being a needy man, and of having, on that account, undertaken the journey himself, instead of sending an agent. His

character of a Christian would have been the principal obstacle in his way : for although, if he had assumed the character of a Jew, he might have been abused, he would have been certain of escaping with his life ; for the Jew is the Rayah, or tributary subject, of Marocco, where, unlike the countries in the East, there are no Christian subjects. In Marocco the religion of the Nazarene is supposed to be that of idolatry ; and those Moslems who, living in districts about Tangier, can, when they please, peep into the Papist chapel, adorned with images and pictures, are confirmed in this opinion.

Not only are the Nazarenes confounded with those against whom their prophet launched such severe anathemas, but the traditions of the Crusaders, and of the expulsion from Spain of their ancestors,* keep up these feelings of enmity against the Christians ; who are supposed to be always plotting the destruction of the Mohamedans : and, therefore, to kill a Christian is considered a meritorious act, and one which ensures Paradise to them : and it must be owned that, in following out this barbarous theory, they are merely retaliating upon us the misdeeds of our forefathers.

The most fortunate thing that could have occurred to Davidson would have been to have made acquaintance, whilst residing at Mogador, with some of the chiefs of the interior. Many years ago, when I was too young to have undertaken the journey with any prospect of useful result to geographical science, I made friends with some of the chiefs, or princes, of the Soudan country, one of whom was the brother of the reigning prince of Shingitti : they were returning from a pilgrimage to Mecca, and had experienced during their transit hither much kindness and assistance from British officers. These chiefs were most anxious that I should have accompanied them to their own country ; and offered to take me on to Timbuctoo, if I had any desire to go there. Finding that I did not fancy the journey as one of pleasure, they endeavoured to tempt me by saying that as many baggage-animals as I chose to take should return with me laden

* There are descendants of the Moorish families of Granada now residing in Tetuan and Fas, who still preserve the keys, and it is said also the title-deeds, of the houses of their Mauro-Spanish ancestors, in the hope that the Arabs will yet return as conquerors to Spain.

with gold-dust, or any other productions of the interior I might choose. On my adverting to the dangers which would attend the journey, one of the party said, "Four hundred of my blood and tribe bear my name: they shall all perish ere the least insult be offered to you, even were you to travel with a jewelled crown upon your head." I found these chiefs far less fanatical than the people of Marocco: they were skilled in Arabic literature, and spoke a dialect resembling that of the Arabs of Mecca.

Supposing Davidson to have assumed the character of a trader, it would have been necessary for him to have used great caution in making notes of his travels whilst under the active eyes of his companions: indeed it would have been better for him to have trusted to his memory until he arrived at Timbuctoo: unless he had resorted to stratagem, and availed himself of his medical functions; which, superstitious as the Moors are, he might easily have done.

Some one or other of the persons composing the kaffla would most probably have been ill, or might easily have been induced to consider himself so; and Davidson could have asserted the necessity of consulting the stars on his case, and of recording their decrees: and whilst professing to do so, he could have made whatever notes and astronomical observations he pleased, without molestation, or exciting suspicion. A barbarian is always fond of being doctored; and a few bread pills, with some incomprehensible words muttered over them, would have been all he need have administered to the imaginary invalid. Whilst attending the ailments of the members of the kaffla, Davidson might have acquired the good will and friendship of them all: and once at Timbuctoo, his return would have been a far easier matter: but he would still have found it his interest to have played the part of a trader, purchasing a sufficient quantity of goods to blind the natives as to his real objects.

Davidson committed, I conceive, a great error in bringing with him from London Abú Bekr as his companion. Putting out of the question the physical incapability and want of moral courage of that very excellent and enlightened negro, the circumstance of his being connected with the reigning families in Soudan not only rendered his return to that country dangerous

to himself, but compromised the life of his protector; who, I think, took a very mistaken view on the subject in his letter to the Duke of Sussex, dated 3rd of July, 1836, in which he said, "My 'companion' (Abú Bekr) "begs most respectfully to present his duty; and hopes your royal highness will deign to receive the few lines from his pen which he begs me to inclose. I am sorry to say I have great fears for his health: he cannot bear fatigue, and has been attacked with ophthalmia. *The whole of the Soudan people know him, and tell me he will prove a certain passport, that he is a cousin of Hamed Libboo, and another of his cousins, Ali, called Koutoribu, the Warrior, is now king of Kong, and that many of his relations are at Kong, all rich and in power.*"

When in Marocco, although his master gained the good wishes of many for having liberated and cherished a Mohamedan, Abú lost caste, as having been in Christian thralldom, and, by continuing to live with Davidson, became an object of constant suspicion to all Moslems: and should he have attempted to return to Europe after visiting the interior, he would have endangered both his own life and that of his protector; for the Sultan of Marocco looks upon himself as the rightful sovereign of all persons professing Mohamedanism.

The health of Abú was also a constant source of trouble to his patron: he was a timid creature, and constantly embarrassing Davidson by his want of energy and moral courage. Even before we arrived at Rabat he appeared to be suffering from the effects of the journey; and often declared to me in confidence that he wished himself again in England, and that he never would have undertaken the journey had he not considered it to be a debt of gratitude to Davidson; that he had no desire to visit his native country, and that his sole hope was to return ere long to Europe, and live quietly amongst an enlightened and civilized people.

Abú Bekr was a good Arabic scholar, but understood very little of the vulgar tongue. He had a great contempt for the Moors; and was especially disgusted by their ignorance and faithlessness.

Little or nothing has been heard of him since Davidson's

murder, and there appears every reason to suppose that he is dead.

I attribute the failure of all our travellers in their attempts to penetrate into the interior of Africa to the notoriety with which their perilous journey has been undertaken; thus exciting the jealousy of both *natives* and *foreigners*. I have not much faith in Caillie's account. He may have been at Timbuctoo: but if he was, accuracy as a draftsman does not appear to have been his forte. I showed to a native of Timbuctoo the sketch he gives of that town; and the man neither recognised the forms of the houses nor the situation of the town itself; although, on being shown other drawings of cities and villages with which he was also acquainted, he at once named the places which they represented.

MOORISH ODE.

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Referred to at page 50.

Ya Du Du ya foom el Hatsem ya Lel - lat - si -

Ya Lel - lat - si, ent-si be - ia ua - na - ha hem

pp

Ya Lel - lat - si, Ya Lel - lat - si, Ktseer h - beeb

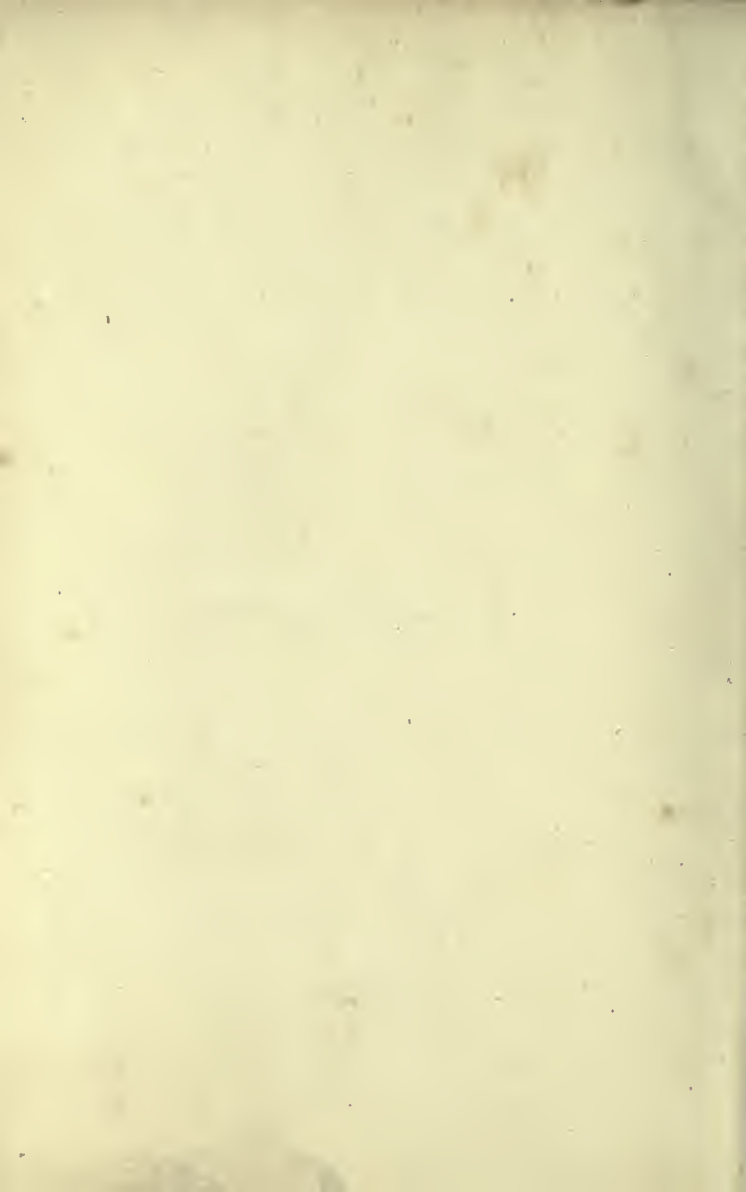
ui gra - mi, Ya Lel - lat - si, Ya Lel - lat - si.

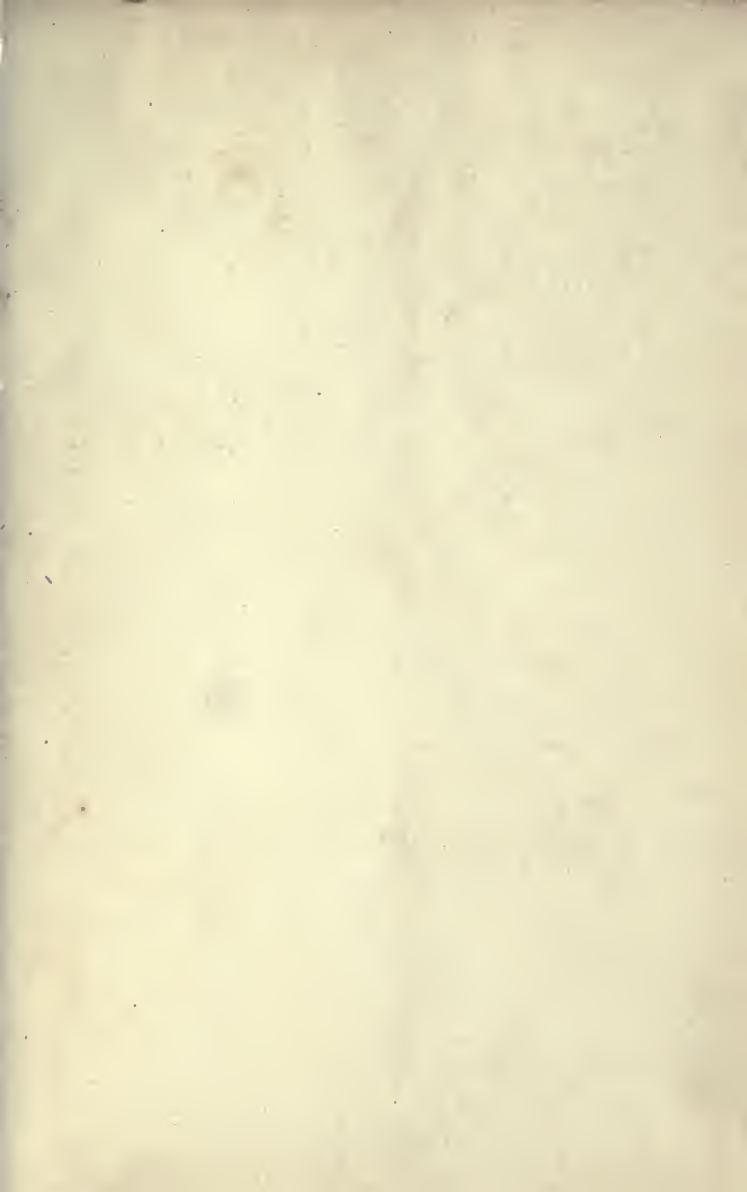
TRANSLATION.

O Dedu! Your mouth is like a ring. O my lady! O my lady!
 You are courted by all, but I am your lord. O my lady! O my lady!
 Much love for you, my sweetheart.

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